

# **Applying “spidey sense”: Emotional Intelligence and Police Decision-Making at Domestic Incidents**

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This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the Requirement's for the award of the degree of Professional Doctorate of Criminal Justice Studies of the University of Portsmouth.

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# Declaration

Whilst registered as a candidate for the above degree, I have not been registered for any other research award. The results and conclusions embodied in this thesis are the work of the named candidate and have not been submitted for any other academic award.

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# Abstract

Chaos theory suggests a small act can have a powerful impact on future events.

This research takes this suggestion and explores the decision-making of police officers at domestic violence incidents as just such an act that can have a long-term impact on victim(s) lives. Applying the concept of emotional intelligence as an assistive means for problem-solving and decision-making, this research aimed to find out how, or if, police officers draw upon emotional intelligence in their decision-making at domestic incidents and what value they place on its development within the force.

Taking a qualitative approach, 27 police officers across four police areas in England were interviewed and the data, coded and categorised, in a thematic analysis that revealed four central themes forming a new 'emotional intelligence competence'. *Environmental competence* is symbolic of policing practice that is adaptive and autonomous and as recommended, supporting officers develop this will frustrate the diminishment of emotional intelligence that reportedly occurs through longer-term policing experience. It will also promote the willingness to follow instinct, essential when responding to domestic incidents. A small change in individual development that can have wider practice and cultural implications for the police service and sustainable long-term safety for the victim.

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For my children, Sabrina, Andrew and Katie and my wonderful grandchildren, thanks for sticking by me. I know it feels like it has been forever.

Lastly, this is for you dad (1934 - 2002). To show you that I can be that person you always knew I could be.

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# List of Acronyms

**CENTREX** – Common name for Central Police Training and Development Authority

**DASH** – Domestic Abused Stalking and Harassment

**DV** – Domestic Violence

**EI** – Emotional Intelligence

**ECI** – Emotional Competency Inventory

**EQi** – Emotional Quotient

**HMIC** – Her Majesties Inspectorate of Constabulary

**HMICFRS** - Her Majesties Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & rescue Services

**IOPC** – Independent Office for Police Conduct

**IPCC** – Independent Police Complaints Commission

**MiLDVE** – Milwaukee Domestic Violence Experiment

**PCSO** – Police Community Support Officer

**PEEL** – Police Effectiveness, Efficiency & Legitimacy

**RO** – Ranked Officer

**SPSS** – Statistical Package for Social Sciences

**THRIVE** – Threat Harm Risk Investigation Vulnerability and Engagement

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# Introduction

The fluttering of butterfly wings, Lorenz (1917 – 2008) believed, had the potential to change the weather system across the globe (Murphy, 1996). In a societal context, chaos theory, the concept offered by Lorenz, creates a thought-provoking idea that an occurrence, seemingly abstract and minute, can have a dramatic impact on future outcomes for individuals or communities. Murphy considers chaos theory in terms of organisations and how, even small decisions or actions can influence outcomes at an organisational level. Similarly, therefore, it is reasonable to consider that an action or decision made by one person, regardless of how small or seemingly insignificant at the time could alter the course of life events of another. If we apply this idea to the police officer and victim of domestic violence (DV), like the butterfly, the officer's actions may appear as abstract or minute at the time but their impact, potentially significant, to the long-term safety of the victim and symbolic of effective police practice.

Human behaviour is based-upon needs and responses, our interaction with others and the decisions that we make. Decisions about lifestyle, romance or career, develop through socialisation, life experience, understanding and reflection that change with age, maturity and knowledge (Marsiske & Margrett, 2006). Professional decision-making and the use of discretion has an evidence-base grounded in skills and competencies relative to the role (Taylor & Kelly, 2006). However, the social influences identified by Marsiske and Margrett (2006) cannot be discounted. Moreover, the restrictive set of rules and regulations of political managerialism prove the role of professional discretion to be bound by the concept of accountability or often, impracticality (2006, p.631). Professional decision-making or discretion is,

therefore, informed by tacit and learned knowledge that is bound by political governance and practiced in, what has been referred to by some, as a culture of blame (Berry, 2009; Fielding, 2018).

The use of discretion in any professional role continues to be the focus of attention in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as much as it was when Lipsky (1980) conducted his research into street-level bureaucracy. In his research, he determined that micro-level application of legislation and policy is subjectively ambiguous and reflective of the diverse and challenging situations practitioners encounter in operational settings. Its use in police work is no exception.

Since Taylor and Kelly's (2006) paper in which they revisited Lipsky's (1980) idea of professional discretion across public reforms of the 25 years proceeding his work and taking account of the change in political governance from a left realist to a neo-liberalism philosophy, there has been more specific political direction. This is evident in 2011, when the then Home Secretary Theresa May, advocated discretion as the most effective approach to front-line policing, free from political interference and representative of the 'will' of the people (May, Rt. Hon, 2011). The professional discretion pendulum swung from the proscriptive narrative of managerialism to one of empowerment and trust, with a single target to "cut crime". The emergence of decision-making models, such as the National Decision-Making Model (ACPO, 2012) in police training, have since provided standardised guidance through which police decision-making is steered (Curtis & Bowlett, 2014).

This apparent reinstatement of police autonomy was arguably a rhetoric step, however, underpinned by an agenda to assist the tight grip of neo-liberalist austerity measures (Sanders-McDonagh & Neville, 2017). These were to reduce the police force rather than recognise the practical benefits of tailored law enforcement, and in relation to DV incidents, discretion continues to be conditional, within a culture shaped by the standardisation of legislative and policy processes that govern their assessment and management. Processes that curtail the attending officers' professional response and appear to have limited positive effect (Richards, Stratton & Letchford, 2008; Vigurs, Wire, Myhill & Gough, 2016).

The frequency and severity of DV has come to the forefront of public and political conscience since the mid- 20<sup>th</sup> century. Second wave feminism aimed to rebalance male-stream criminological thought by highlighting the powerlessness of women in a patriarchal society (Akers & Sellers, 2009). The definition of patriarchy offered by Akers and Sellers suggests it is a "fundamental principle of societal organisation...in which the rights and privileges of males are superior to those of females" (2009, p.268) characterising the vast majority of Western societies throughout history and challenging power differentials within the family and their impact on violence against women. Feminist influence can be seen in the development of legal definitions, legislation, interventions and evidence-based practice across the criminal justice and allied agencies of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, that is symbolic of female victimisation and continues to pursue victim (in)justice (Davies, Francis & Greer, 2007).

This research approaches individual and societal interaction as based upon just such symbolism and that it is integral to human understanding and behavioural patterns

(Hewitt & Shulman, 2011). Symbolic Interactionism (SI) is a theory that emphasises the way in which, we understand human life. Physical, verbal, gestural and pictorial symbols, the meaning we attach to them and our subsequent response, individually and societally, shape the meaning of our lives. There are collective understandings of particular symbols, for example the sign of a cross being synonymous with a church and religion but also much more subtle symbolisms such as a gesture, a look, a spoken phrase or tone. Meanings attached to the latter can sometimes have underlying connotations, only truly understood by one other (Craven, 2008). The victim. In this research, it refers to the female DV victim.

Emotional intelligence (EI) can support the way in which we interpret and react to symbols. Goleman (1998b) offers a framework of competences through which we can understand EI and a model through which we can use them to enhance our professional practice. In later work (Goleman, 2002) he also offers a framework of six leadership styles that incorporate these competences but are interchangeable depending on the situation, individual or institution. Goleman, as others, attributes leadership to those who occupy the management structure of an organisation. This research recognises leadership in those lower ranked officers; the front line officer in attendance of the DV incident who has first-hand knowledge of the situation and thus the professional who needs to make decisions concerned with risk assessment/management and the safety of the victim. The leaders who represent the butterfly.

## Aims and Objectives

The overall aim of this study, therefore, is to establish if there is a direct link between EI and the decision-making process, the value, if any, placed upon it by the participating officers, and whether there is an appetite for its development at both an individual and organisational level. It explores this by considering the restraints of legislation and policy that frame police work, the symbolic meaning of policing and DV victims and any potential currency in the development of EI in the current policing climate. Police officers face the reality of dealing with DV incidents on a daily basis and make decisions that have an impact on not only the victim(s) life but also that of the offender, the family and the wider community. If EI is a positive contributory factor in this process, then this research aims to identify why, how and if not, is it something worth developing.

Three objectives underpinned the questions used to guide the focus of the research that are embedded in the structure of the literature review and the semi-structured interviews; '*understanding EI*', '*managing emotions*' and '*EI development*', provided the context of the literature search and the emphasis of the interview schedule. The latter asked participants if they respond to their instincts, how this response impacts on their decision-making process within the legislative and policy framework and their understanding of and opinions as to if the development of EI might support them in the assessment and management of DV incidents.

The structure of the research is broken down into chapters that explore each component of study, drawing together the literature and the first-hand experiences of officers across four police regions as follows:

## Chapter 1 – A Review of the Literature

This chapter divides into several sections that provide a structure to the critical review of current knowledge about the different aspects of the research. The first, ***Finding the Literature***, outlines the resources used in compiling the literature review and the rationale for the inclusion or omission of certain documents or types of document to maintain validity of the information used (Francis, 2011).

***Contextualising the Policing of DV*** explores DV as a crime issue that forms a significant proportion of police work (HMIC, 2015) but that is possibly one of the least understood (Reiner, 2010). It is widely agreed by scholars, specialist organisations and government officials, that the occurrence of DV is far higher than reported but the consequences of leaving abusive relationships outweigh the reasons for staying (Davies, 2007; Heidensohn, 2011; Stanko, 1985; Women's Aid, 2018). Also agreed, is that the arrest of the perpetrator can increase the fear of a victim, enough to motivate them not to pursue prosecution or even protect their abuser (Sherman & Harris, 2015). However, it is this reluctance by victims to leave that has a negative impact on the perception of DV victims and which symbolises the 'common view' that "if it was that bad she would leave" (Women's Aid, 2018). This view by the public is also, inevitably, the view of some police officers (HMIC, 2015; Reiner, 2010; Rowe, 2007). Dispelling the myths that are symbolic of DV victims and their relationship with abuse therefore, is an important issue in the implementation of the policing 'positive action strategy' (College of Policing, 2015), which is also discussed in this section of the chapter.

In the third section, headed ***Understanding Emotional Intelligence (EI)*** there is an exploration of the concept of EI. It looks at the scholarly origins of EI and how, despite its critics, such as Murphy (2014) or Waterhouse (2006), it has been widely accepted into the business world as essential to effective leadership. This section unpicks the two different approaches to EI, of competency and ability-based models, which lead into the fourth section, ***EI Mixed Models***, which explains the framework of Goleman (1998) used in this research. The next section ***Why Goleman? – EI and Police Decision-Making*** provides a brief rationale for this choice.

The final sections ***The Symbolism of Emotion*** and ***SI and Policing***, outline the theoretical approach of the researcher in terms of understanding self and self-identity, and the application of knowledge and understanding in our interactions within society. It evaluates the idea of behaviour being socially constructed, (Blumer, 1986) and how patterns of behaviour follow a series of symbolic cues and experiential learning (Stryker, 1980). In progressing to more recent literature (Stryker, 2008; Stryker & Burke, 2000; Stryker, Owens & White, 2000), it examines Stryker's contemporary view on how attitudes and emotions impact on symbolic understandings and this is considered more specifically in police culture through the work of van Hulst (2013). In exploring the relationship between cultural attitudes and symbolic understandings, we can appreciate the responses of police officers in their interactions with victims, peers and organisational policy.



## **Chapter 2 – The Methodology**

At the very heart of social research is epistemology, the theory of knowledge.

Epistemological study theorises what constitutes knowledge, and how we understand and characterise the world (Crowther-Dowey & Fussey, 2014, p.14).

Whilst we conceive knowledge to be what we know, how we know it and the kind of knowledge that we know, the factual accuracy of what we know and how it is learned, is not a clear-cut process. Ongoing debate surrounds the idea of what qualifies as knowledge, and approaches in the pursuit of that knowledge, divide between the scientific approach of positivism and subjective approach of interpretivism (Bryman, 2016, p. 690).

Epistemology focuses on propositional knowledge, a knowledge that can be factual or circumstantial, principally a knowable truth that is part of a multiple set of knowledge understood by one or more persons. There are different types of knowledge, topical truths based around a particular subject for example astrology or psychology but essentially the factual accuracy of that knowledge, is embedded within the reliability of the source. In social research, the search for knowledge can be sought using a single epistemological focus, exploring qualitative (interpretivism) or quantitative (positivism) data or a mixed method which combines learning knowledge through the analysis of both the 'why' and the 'how many' (Bryman, 2016).

The methodology discusses the epistemological approach to the research and how, the researcher's development and eventual identity as a naturalistic researcher evolved (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It explores how this evolvment impacts upon not

only the interpretation of data, but the context and environment through which it was gathered. It outlines the methods used in selecting and discussing the secondary data as well as the primary, moving from mixed-methods to a purely qualitative focus; gathering police officer's experiences and opinions in relation to their understanding of EI and their views on how it does, or does not feature in their decision-making around risk in domestic incidents. Drawing on the work of Braun and Clarke (2006), the data collected through semi-structured interviews, is analysed through the system of thematic analysis, culminating into four predominant themes.

### **Chapter 3 - 6 Thematic Chapters**

The next four chapters set out the qualitative results from the interviews undertaken with the police officers and some discussion with the literature. The demographic details and other, verbal/non-verbal and/or behavioural information (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) provides context to the responses and themes that emerged from the study. The findings are then separated into the four most relevant thematic chapters, *'Gut instinct and "spidey sense"', 'I've got it but he hasn't', 'The voice in my ear' and 'Working in a blame culture'*. Each chapter provides the participants reactions to the questions in the conversations that ensued at interview and critically discusses the most important factors within each category.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

This final chapter analyses the findings further with the literature to determine any new information that can contribute to our understanding of EI in police decision-

making and the value this may have on the long-term outcomes for female victims of DV. Adopting a critical view (Bryman, 2016) it seeks to explore the themes in relation to how police officers feel about EI and its relationship with decision-making at DV incidents. In doing so, this chapter proposes a new competence, 'environmental competence', specifically related to policing, that is explained and applied as a potential operational tool. This new competence, it is suggested can be adapted to the environment, environments that are outside the organisational premises considered the place of work, but often highly emotionally charged and volatile places, diverse and yet part of the everyday working environment for police officers attending domestic incidents.

# Chapter 1 – A Review of the Literature

The concept of EI became of increasing interest to the private and public sector in the 1990's, with business leaders in particular, valuing the link Daniel Goleman made between EI and successful enterprise (Cherniss, Goleman, Emmerling, Cowan & Alder, 1998; Gunkel, Schlagel & Engle, 2013; Murphy, 2006; Thory, 2016). In recent years this interest has filtered into the criminal justice sector across the globe, for instance The Correctional Service in Canada (Stys & Brown, 2004), law enforcement in India (Lokesh, Patra & Venkatesan, 2016) and Probation in the UK (Knight, Phillips & Chapman, 2016). Both Saville (2006) and Daus and Ashkanasy (2005) amongst others (for example, see the work of Professor Mark Bond from [www.6seconds.org](http://www.6seconds.org) ), have also written about EI as necessary for effective police performance in the USA and in the UK.

The College of Policing (2017a) emphasise the positive impact emotional awareness, particularly empathy, can have on the interactional behaviours that value community engagement and cultural sensitivity. However, there is little evidence to indicate it featuring in police practice. Research around empathy in the investigative process, for example, is still in its infancy (Dando & Oxburgh, 2015; Oxburgh, Ost, Morris, & Cherryman, 2015) and features little in guidance; in a single component of the Achieving Best Evidence in Criminal Proceedings guidance (Ministry of Justice, 2011, p.189). What policing appears to rely on is individual and more particularly, cultural meanings of the role of police, who victims are and the characteristics of perpetrators. From a symbolic interactionist perspective, these are based upon person-centred *and* collective symbolic understandings, understandings that are

inter-connected with emotions and therefore attitudes, that will inevitably have impact on interactions and decision-making.

'Man' has used symbols to communicate across the ages and as we move through different eras, cultures and religions, we can identify symbols and their meanings to the collective society. For example, the cross as a symbol of Christianity (peace, faith) or the swastika, in clockwise form, a symbol of the German Nazi party (fascism, genocide). In 21<sup>st</sup> century capitalist society, symbols represent brands, a trademark symbol such as the 'tick' for Nike or the 'diamond' for Renault. In adopting symbols for brands, advertising can trigger unconscious memories which if are pleasant or associated with quality, can be persuasive in consumerism (Jung, 2013, P.18). The symbolic meaning of the police officer, the DV perpetrator or victim, can trigger an individual or collective understanding or attitude and associated emotions from either actor that if not managed intelligently, could have a negative impact on perceptions, decision-making and resultant interactions/actions. The nature of symbols and their influence, therefore, guide us through our social interactive journey, shaping our behaviour according to the meanings we attribute to them (Hewitt & Shulman, 2011).

Challenging collective meanings of the DV victim and deciding to do a follow-up interview or taking time to signpost a victim to support services, could influence the decisions they make in the future involving their domestic situation. Ultimately, this could result in them avoiding further harm or even death. The meanings attached to

DV and DV victims therefore, are critical if actions, however small, are to have a positive impact on police decision-making.

These critical decisions and actions, regardless of how insignificant they may seem, can have both a short and long-term impact on the DV victim. Lorenz (1917 – 2008), a mathematician and meteorologist, accidentally discovered chaos theory, sometimes referred to as change theory (Lucking, 1991) whilst trying to predict weather conditions. He stumbled on the idea that a slight change in one deterministic non-linear state, could significantly affect another. Often referred to as the ‘butterfly effect’, Lorenz proposed that even the slight flutter of a butterfly’s wings could later cause a tornado in another part of the world.

When applied to the natural sciences and human behaviour, chaos theory has been successful in explaining how apparent random behaviour is part of a systematic pattern of actions that lead to a determined outcome (Ayers, 1997). Ayers tells us that chaos theory is anything but random, but rather resultant of a sensitivity to initial conditions that cause a series of events; a small seemingly insignificant change of the initial conditions, can change future outcomes that may appear random, but are in fact the result of that small change. The butterfly in Lorenz’s example, whilst only producing a minute amount of wind by fluttering its wings, could change the whole weather system later along the linear weather system. In human behaviour therefore, a small or simple action could have a significant affect along the continuum of an individual's behaviour that, without close inspection would be considered random. For example, attending a routine health check could highlight a long-term health

issue that caught early, will reduce the impact on individual mortality, their family, employment and NHS resources. Small actions, therefore, can have a long-term radiating impact on far more than just the individual (Riger, Raja & Camacho, 2002).

Murphy (1996, p.103) discusses chaos theory in terms of issues management, diffusing public opinions that could “amplify in to serious conflict” through the analysis of micro and macro relationship trends of social concerns and organisations. Those who ‘manage’ such issues, Murphy reports, suggest a holistic decision-making approach based upon a “heightened sensitivity” or “sixth sense” as the most effective way of linking apparent random occurrences with underpinning social unrest. In terms of police decision-making involving DV victims, making decisions based upon such an approach could result in actions that have an impact later on in the victim’s life and continued victimhood that directly links to a growing awareness and social concern about DV.

As with all other statutory agencies, the police operate within a legislative framework, PACE (1984) and a realm of policies and processes, such as the NDM (ACPO, 2012) or Code of Ethics (College of Policing, 2014a). To maintain police accountability, the human rights of the offender(s) and the protection of the victim(s), this framework must be adhered to. When dealing with DV incidents, the police have a ‘duty of positive action’ (College of Policing, 2014; Richards et al, 2008) that legally obliges them to take steps to protect the victim and pursue the perpetrator. The Ending Violence against Women and Girls Strategy (Home Office, 2016) sets out to support the capability of the police and CPS to identify and successfully prosecute

the offenders. However, DV is an invisible crime (Davies, Francis & Wyatt, 2014) and is expanding into a more diverse range of behaviours, with cultural practices such as Honour Based Violence and technology enhanced/facilitated abuse, such as Revenge Porn (Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015, s33) making the policing of DV more complex and challenging than ever.

An exploration of the existing literature helps us understand the current landscape of DV, the framework through which the police are governed in their tackling of it and how or if EI features within cultural or individual practice. This chapter will explain the steps taken to identify the literature and contextualisation of the policing of domestic incidents. It will outline the core features of EI and the symbolism of emotions in the pursuance of effective and non-discriminatory decision-making, within the legislative and policy framework of criminal justice.

## **Finding the Literature**

The process of researching the literature has been an ongoing task from the inception of the research idea. Indeed, the amount of literature consumed for this research has been overwhelming albeit inspiring. Inevitably, certain authors become more preferable for a variety of reasons; easier to understand, they are already familiar or their work appears more relevant or closely linked to your research. Using these literary scholars led to the discovery of other authors and articles, in what Wohlin (2014) terms as snowballing.

Often, snowballing is only associated with the non-probability method of identifying participants (Francis, 2011, p.26), but snowballing is a useful and well-used method



of literary research, following the citations and reference list of an author, to track and explore the literature used in their writing (Wohlin, 2014). In addition, there is a system of forward and backwards sampling that Wohlin describes as complementary to traditional snowballing methods, by looking at where and when the articles/papers read are referenced and cited, how are they used and what point are they making or disputing.

This was the method used most for researching secondary documents particularly around specific subjects such as EI and police decision-making. Adopting a narrative review in the preliminary stage of the research (Francis, 2011, p.21) supported the exploration of current knowledge and thinking in these areas and how they could be applied to this research. It is a fluid and exploratory method, often leading the researcher into unknown and unanticipated territory. Most notably in this project, it led the researcher to the idea of naturalistic inquiry. It also highlighted how little information there was about EI in police decision-making and thus, how the findings may contribute to practice development.

Official documents were treated with somewhat more scepticism than academic literature. Not because academic researchers were always considered completely independent, but rather that the official documents were more likely subjective or presented with an agenda to benefit the commissioning government department or organisation. They were however important in terms of political contextualisation, informative on the policy and processes that frame police work and were located on government and other official websites, including the College of Policing and Ministry of Justice.

Access to secondary data was through the traditional route of the university library, primarily via the University of Portsmouth however, a Sconul account with the local University of Northampton library provided access to additional library resources. The University of Northampton have been teaching Policing and Criminology for many years and so was an excellent source of a broad selection of literature. The University of Worcester was also accessible. Other, more specialised material were located from joining research groups such as Research Gate, registering on the National Police Library online, subscribing to The Police Chief Magazine and the Police Oracle as well as discussion with colleagues and the sharing of material. Attending conferences also presented opportunities to find new emerging material and talk to others who research the field of policing.

As with all research practice, however, there are some issues in relation to the validity of, and how secondary research is used (May, 2001). In evaluating the validity of the literature, checking the author's credentials is essential as a starting point. What is their discipline? Is their work relevant? Who commissioned it? and thus, what potential biases are there? As May (2001, p.197) tells us, what the author decides to leave in or omit, "is itself informed by decisions which relate to the social, political and economic environment" in which they occupy and is part of their reality that is susceptible to manipulation. Particular care was taken when using the infinite resource of the internet, where credibility and validity are even more hazardous to ascertain.

There are, of course, other issues that need to be considered. Ethical issues that may arise in negotiating, obtaining and using certain data, for example, access to it

as well as how it will be used in the analysis. For a qualitative study, the aim and objectives help to structure the focus of the secondary data collection (Francis, 2011, p.23). Murray (2011, p.129) states there are different purposes to the literature review, depending on the nature of the research. He outlines nine steps that shape it; define the terms, justify the selection of the literature, justify omissions, forecast the sections of the review, signal the structure, link their work to the literature, critique it, define the gap and summarise their overview. Murray proposes these steps are fluid but necessary and constitute the framework for a good literature review. By following these steps and those of May (2001) the following provides a viable review of the literature that informed this study.

### **Contextualising the Policing of Domestic Violence (DV)**

In January 2008, Mavis Clift died as the result of her estranged son-in-law, Paul Barber setting fire to her home in Northampton after repeatedly threatening his wife Susan and her family (IPCC, 2014). Despite the numerous reports to police, Barber was able to act on his threats, as key intelligence, was neither acted upon nor its relevance linked to an escalation of risk. This was not the first occasion Northamptonshire police force have failed to take positive action when dealing with a domestic incident. In 2010, Louise Webster, was stabbed to death by Martin Ashby. Officers deployed to the incident refused to attend, stating they were involved in an operation that their Inspector would not want them to leave (IPCC, 2011). The investigation could not conclude their attendance would have saved the life of Ms Webster but they could have detained Martin Ashby and assisted the paramedics at the scene several minutes earlier.

These incidents and police responses are not synonymous to Northamptonshire police. The policing of DV nationally, continues to be an area of concern. For example see cases of West Midlands response to a domestic incident 2002; Casey Brittle, Nottinghamshire Police 2011; Becky McPhee, Merseyside Police 2014 (which can be found at [www.ipcc.gov.uk/investigations\\_and\\_reports](http://www.ipcc.gov.uk/investigations_and_reports)) – despite the implementation of the positive action strategy designed to promote intervention in DV incidents (Richards, 2008; Rowe, 2007).

DV incidents make up a significant amount of operational police work, accounting for 214,965 arrests across the 39 police forces in England and Wales for the year to March 2019 (ONS, 2019). In the three years between April 2014 and March 2017, 239 women were killed by their partners or ex-partners ([www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)). Women's Aid state that one in four women experience some form of DV in their life, and that 1.3m women in England and Wales reported incidents of DV in the year ending March 2018. It is clear from these statistics, that DV remains a significant crime problem in society. This is particularly indicative when research proposes over 30 instances of abuse occur before any type of recording (Hoyle, 2007) suggesting a hidden DV crime figure of substantial proportion.

Women's Aid ([www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk),) reiterate these findings of DV as a hidden crime, or what Davies et al (2014) refer to as an invisible crime. They report that DV accounts for 10% of all crime and of these, 92.1% of the perpetrators are male and 83.3% of victims are female, accentuating victimisation as a gendered issue. They

also emphasise that repeat victimisation is higher in DV situations than in any other crime type and that approximately two women are killed every week by their partner or ex-partner. The effectiveness of policing, however, differs significantly across forces.

Principal findings in the HIMC (2015, p.12) report, *Peel: Police effectiveness 2015 (vulnerability) – A national overview* suggest an inconsistent policing approach to DV, poor management and lack of understanding with 15 forces highlighted as ‘cause for concern’ in regard to risk assessing and the implementation of positive action. The report further suggested training for all staff would improve and facilitate an organisational and cultural shift in understanding the complexities of DV.

In the *PEEL: Police efficiency 2017. A national overview* (HMICFRS, 2017, p.17) report the issue of complexity and invisibility in DV offences is reiterated, with the Inspectorate acknowledging good progress in some forces but suggesting the overall national progress in the uncovering of underreported crimes like DV remaining ‘mixed’. Those that have made good progress have taken innovative and consultative steps in their planning and proactive partnership approaches but there is still much more that needs to be done if DV is to be reduced, with the HMIC (2015, p.28) reporting a 2% annual increase and an average of 100 calls to the police every hour. Methods of prediction and a focused strategy are essential, therefore, to any effective preventative plan and ‘positive action’ is an integral part of the national strategy (College of Policing, 2015).

The thinking behind 'positive action' is ultimately to protect the victim(s) but also to encourage police officers to get involved and take the matter of DV, historically referred to as 'wife beating', more seriously (Berry, 2009, p.55; Groves & Thomas, 2014, p.71). The Home Office Circular 66/90 (Home Office, 1990) was a landmark document because, for the first time, DV was recognised as a serious crime and it recommended all police forces put policies in place to protect victims and use their powers of arrest to support this (Groves & Thomas, 2014, p50). The case of *Osman v UK* (1998) 29 EHRR 245 supports this, holding that the police had a responsibility to take reasonable steps to prevent harm under Article 2 (The Right to Life) of the Human Rights Act 1998. In 2008, ACPO issued guidance that officers had a 'duty of positive action' throughout the whole process of investigation in protection of the victim and any other affected family members (College of Policing, 2015; NPIA, 2008, p26).

'Duty of positive action' means that the attending officer must consider the arrest of the offender at the scene at his or her professional discretion. Arrest would be dependent on their assessment of risk imminence and as a reductive or preventative measure. Within the terms of PACE (1984), arrest is normally necessary when protecting a vulnerable person or child, but in the case of DV, it also assists in the expedition of any subsequent proceedings (Groves & Thomas, 2014, p70). The government reinforced this action by substituting s24 and 25 of PACE (1984) through the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 ss110-11, making all offences arrestable providing it could be justified; arrest cannot simply be used because it can be but because it is considered a positive step to prevent or protect victims from harm.

Decision-making and the use of professional discretion in operational policing is a key factor in the implementation of policy and guidance that seeks to restrict a police officer's interpretation and application of the law to within a strategically led framework (Rowe, 2007). The NDM (ACPO, 2012) provides a generic framework within which police officers are expected to problem-solve, standardising the process of operational decision-making and the exertion of their authority as law enforcement officers. The model is centred on the National Mission Statement core values (College of Policing, 2014b) guiding officers through a five-stage process that structures professional discretion, reducing risk aversion and promoting victim safety through positive intervention.

In terms of positive arrest, Rowe (2007) suggests the introduction of the policy was to encourage officers to intervene in DV incidents rather than discount them (2007, p283). Historically, DV had been considered a private concern in what Heidensohn (2011, p.661) terms the pre-integration era; before DV and other gendered offences such as rape and sexual assault were relocated in the public sphere, which aimed to increase visibility and detection of invisible crimes and prompt political and police response. The policy aims to curtail officer subjectivity in exercising discretion and curb the tendency to categorise incidents as 'no crimes' due to a cultural misunderstanding of DV or inherent belief that it is a private matter. A lack of understanding about DV and the absence of understanding of the relationship of the reported 'couple' (it is important to note here that 'couple' refers to the perpetrator and victim and that, in many cases, their relationship as partners can be estranged or ended) significantly influences the response of the attending officer. Many victims of repeat DV who continue to live with their abuser are less likely to be known to the

attending officers (MacQueen & Norris, 2016, p69) until the victim is ready to end the relationship. It is only at this point that she will seek the assistance of the police.

Lack of knowledge of the relationship, however, can lead to poor decisions. It is in just such decision-making circumstances, that EI could be drawn upon to support the officers in taking more effective discretionary actions and utilising their position, as a symbol of protection and empowerment.

Richards et al (2008) assert that the interjection of a greater authority (the police) challenges offenders about their behaviour and rebalances the power dynamics in the couple relationship, showing the victim, they do not have to accept abusive and/or violent behaviour and showing the offender that they no longer have control. They suggest "any failure to arrest where a power exists or to take positive action will result in increased risks to the victim and a perception by the offender that they are untouchable" (2008, p19). When attending a DV incident, therefore, the expectation is that the response in terms of risk management and execution of the positive action policy will be the same regardless of which officer(s) attend. In doing so, they consistently reinforce the symbol of their authority and the law, though the outcome is not always perceived as positively as the policy suggests.

Rowe (2007) explored the impact of the positive action policy on officer's perceived ability to use their professional discretion when dealing with incidents of DV. What he found was that whilst most officers accepted the spirit of the policy, "many did have reservations, often of a practical nature, about how the positive arrest policy would be operationalised" (2007, p.284), in particular, its limitations on their decision-making. They raised concerns about the effectiveness of arrest, particularly in



relation to how they felt victims made poor witnesses, believing they normalised the perpetrators behaviour towards them and thus minimised the risk posed to them. However, there were also misgivings about the repercussions for victims when an arrest was executed, and how the policy, dismissed victim concerns.

Hoyle (2007) echoes this in her research that indicates how victims, are generally considered the best judge of their own safety. Therefore, mandatory policies that ignore the victims' perspective are essentially, ineffective and potentially dangerous. Sherman and Harris (2015) reiterate this in their study of DV in the Milwaukee Domestic Violence Experiment (MilDVE). They found that victims were 64% more likely to be killed by their partner or ex-partner, following an arrest or warning. This was particularly significant in African-American women who occupied the lower-income or unemployed sector of society. They suggest the uniqueness of each case needs to be reviewed before 'arrest' action is taken, reviewed in terms of 'couple' demographics and what long-term benefit would be gained through a formal prosecution process.

Whilst this latter research originates in the US, the findings are of discernible interest given the comparable positive action policy operated here in England and Wales. Furthermore, Hoyle's (2007, p.158) suggestion that arrest and prosecution has not been proven to reduce the risks posed to victims in England and Wales supports their assertion and poses a viable rationale as to why those victims who are aware, are more likely to withdraw from the prosecution process. As stated by Sokoloff and Dupont (2005, p.50), "there is no one-size-fits-all explanation for domestic violence and that, consequently, solutions must reflect these differences". So whilst the

government has seemingly adopted a positive stance to support the victims of DV, the blanket policy of positive action that does not take account of the victim perspective may actually increase re-offending rates, recidivism, and even victim mortality.

The police officers who participated in Rowe's (2007) study reflect Hoyle's (2007) viewpoint, and her concerns raised about the repercussions of arrest on the victim; "one or more officers indicated that they would not have effected an arrest had the positive arrest policy not strongly influenced them to do so" (Rowe, 2007, p.292). This implies that officers do consider 'couple' demographics and what long-term benefits there may be, but these are disregarded to ensure the implementation of the policy 'to the letter'. This literal application of policy denies autonomy in the exercise of professional discretion by the attending officer, a practice Lipsky (1980) termed as 'street-level bureaucracy'; the use of professional judgement in choosing how or if to apply a policy in any one particular situation by considering all factors and the long-term interests of the parties involved.

Lipsky's (1980) theory is rooted in the notion that the practical implementation of policy requires an element of discretion for it to be effective. Operationally, practitioners such as the police encounter diverse and challenging people and situations on a daily, sometimes hourly basis, that when coupled with the dilemma of ambiguous guidance or legislation result in creative and often subjective discretion in service delivery. At DV incidents' this often involves complex and unscripted tasks that do not 'fit' with policy formula and are undertaken away from the supervisory arm, of the organisation. It is reliant on an officer's ideas about and experiences of

DV that can differ from that of their superiors or organisations. Nevertheless, the "strong" influence of the policy described by Rowe's (2007) participants, appears to suppress any resistance to deviate from it.

Tantamount to the critique of the 'one size fits all' approach to DV, the practice of street-level bureaucracy also has its flaws. Flexible implementation of policy, inevitably results in different ways of managing an incident, what Canton (2011) refers to as interrater-reliability; despite similarity in training, the interpretation of law and policy can differ between practitioners. This ultimately impacts on, the victim and offender's experience of the police and the criminal justice system. Jones, Newburn and Reiner (2017, p.285) explain this as a problem due to the pluralisation of policing and accountability. They explore issues around transparency and effectiveness where a variety of roles ranging from local authority patrol forces to PCSO's (Police Community Support Officer) has created a multi-faceted, multi-agency involvement in DV that can result in problems with coordination, and fragmentation of policing provisions that can differ from area to area.

The PEEL reports are evidence of the government's advancement of organisational accountability, although this is arguably disseminated down to individual officers, in what is often described, as a culture of blame. This is particularly so, where a domestic fatality occurs and actions are scrutinised. In Berry's (2009, p.1) report, *Reducing Bureaucracy in Policing*, she set out to "challenge the police service and government to remove unnecessary bureaucracy and assist in tackling pervasive risk aversion". She indicated how officers felt mistakes were not tolerated and rather than support the use of discretion, they operated in a 'blame culture' that undermined

autonomy in decision-making. Consequently, they chose “to follow rules and procedures to the letter” (2009, p.61), which can damage the communities sense of security and breach confidence between police and public.

Perhaps more importantly, this 'blame culture' can damage the officer's willingness to make decisions independently. In recommendation 36, Berry (2009) supports the officers' requests for greater discretion when dealing with DV incidents, rather than the over-reliance on standardised processes and rigid risk assessments, such as the DASH form “...with officers and staff being judged and supported on the quality of the decision-making process rather than on the outcome” (2009, p. 55) the organisation could create a developmental environment, rather than a culture of blame within which officer's felt unfairly scrutinised and disempowered.

In direct contrast, recent interest in Syed's (2015) *Black Box Thinking. Marginal Gains and the Secrets of High Performance* by senior police officers and others dedicated to evidence-based policing, indicates an appreciation of 'learning by mistakes' and a shift from the 'blame culture' Berry (2009) suggests. Indeed, after Berry's report, in 2010 the IPCC (Independent Police Complaints Commission) issued a statement of values, which included that they discourage a blame culture within the police force (Heaton, 2010) and which the interest in the Black Box Thinking philosophy would confirm.

Muir (2018) supports this move away from individual blame. In his blog of 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2018, he states that when things go wrong in policing, “there is a default focus on the culpability and accountability of the individual officer”. This, he suggests, is due to

the investigatory focus of reviews being on the “personal conduct” of those involved rather than it being treated as a performance issue that should be addressed via Human Resources. In the report, *How do we move from a blame culture to a learning culture in policing?* (The Police Foundation, 2018), the different standards of accountability applied to the police, that are not applied to other criminal justice agencies, was raised. Alongside the use of language such as “things going wrong” and “mistakes being made” (2018, p.3) the report implied a political failure to understand the complexities of policing and the greater burden officers endure.

The report goes on to talk about how the cultural barrier of blaming the individual is indicative of an organisation that is avoiding confronting the more intrinsic issues needed for organisational change. It refers to the difficulties for officers to challenge the entrenched attitudes that support this culture, challenges that Syed (2015) says need to be part of a ‘no blame’ mentality to learning when errors are made whether this is individual, mechanical, political or organisational a constant learning that is driven by innovation that redefines failure to a method of success. In his blog, Muir (2015) goes on to say that this individual focus on officers to scapegoat when mistakes are made, prevents transparency from those involved, as they fear the repercussions for their colleagues and themselves. This is far-removed from the idea of Black Box Thinking, advocated by Syed (2015) and while the failings of police remain documented through Domestic Homicide Reviews, mass media and government rhetoric, approaches to DV and associated risk assessment, such as those offered by Syed, need to be explored so cultural changes can be made.

## Understanding Emotional Intelligence (EI)

Originally derived from the work of Salovey and Mayer (1990, p.189), EI is defined as:

the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions.

They viewed emotions as an organised response system that shaped an individual's actions and behaviour and identified EI as an ability to assess and regulate them in order to achieve positive outcomes (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). This idea was based on four categories: appraisal and expression, appraisal and recognition of emotions in others, regulation of own emotions and utilization of emotions. The latter category was subdivided into four further categories that focused on the flexibility and creativity in planning and thinking, such that could redirect negative emotions and use them in a positive way. Often, they suggested, this could be quite a sacrificial act, where the positive gain for one may be through the willing short-term detriment of another (1997, p.201). The skill of using negative emotions to achieve positive outcomes is one of the focuses in EI development; a link of intelligence with emotions that could be used instrumentally to realise broader goals and successes of the individual, team or indeed, an organisation (Mayer, Salovey, Caruso & Sitarenios, 2001).

Despite such escalating and favourable interest in the EI concept over recent decades, there is also a stream of criticism. In a collection of 15 chapters, Murphy (2006) edits a critique of EI from 26 academic perspectives, which culminates into two main thematic conclusions. Firstly, whilst the study of emotions has value, it has

no single definition. This poses problems in terms of measuring and evaluating an individual's level of EI or its effectiveness in behaviour modification. Self-report questionnaires, are argued as easily forged and the development of EI viewed with cynicism; if you cannot accurately measure EI then how can you map its development and thus predict performance? Secondly, to regard it as an intelligence is highly refuted suggesting that it is merely a new label for existing constructs already explored and explained as personality traits and cognitions. Spector and Johnson (2006, p.341) argue that "to some extent, the debate over whether it is appropriate to call EI an intelligence ... is a rhetorical issue that distracts from the more important question, how do we understand emotions?".

Waterhouse's (2006) work supports this analysis, claiming the acceptance of EI as an intelligence is damaging to the pedagogical field. She states there is a lack of researched evidence or successful application to support its claim. Like Murphy (2006) and the associated academics, she concluded the definitions were inconsistent, conceptually unclear and impossible to measure (Waterhouse, 2006a, p.252) arguing that the multiple and conflicting EI measures and constructs cannot compose a definitive meaning and therefore have limited predictive value in real world success. There is a published debate between Waterhouse (2006, 2006a) and Cherniss, Exstein, Goleman and Weissberg (2006, p.3), the latter suggesting her argument, though valid in part, is misguided, built upon little or no systematic review of the scientific evidence. They also question her criticism of the multiplicity of EI suggesting that, "at this early stage of the theory's development, the generation of several versions of EI theory is a sign of vitality in the field, not a weakness" (2006, p.4).

Models of EI, whilst positing differences, do have a high degree of commonality, which is based upon the provisional idea described as the 'perception of emotion', the ability to identify, recognise and manage the emotions of 'self' and others. Although labelled differently within frameworks of understanding, for example, some referring to character traits, others to abilities, the idea of emotion as an intelligence is, considered, feasible. So, whilst its critics such as Waterhouse, Murphy and others (see also Fineman, 2004; Fambrough & Hart, 2008 or Miners, Côté & Lievens, 2017) raise issues around quantification and predictability, the very nature of emotions, our understanding of and ability to reframe them intelligently and positively when our natural instinct may be to behave defensively or aggressively, continues to be of interest.

Its popularity as a real and effective tool in managing oneself and others' is displayed not only in an array of literature, but training packages advertised across the World Wide Web. Indeed, Waterhouse (2006, p 207) identifies that in the period 1 June 2005 to 1 December 2005, Google education claim that workshops for the delivery of EI increased from 9,180 to 45,100 and at time of writing, a search for EI Training Packages on Google found over 28m 'hits' of workshops, courses and consultancy advocating the benefits of EI development. This popularity was driven by Daniel Goleman's (1998a) article, *What makes a leader?* in which he reinforced his EI model as a leadership requisite and through which the concept of EI became an international phenomenon. In doing so, the word 'intelligence' became associated with more than just higher levels of knowledge and technical ability but also with emotional competence. However, before we explore this further, it would be useful to



define emotion and intelligence as separate entities, before exploring how these have been interlinked to form the concept of EI this research is applying.

An emotion is a feeling associated with intimate and social interactions with others, situations or our environment. How we feel about someone, an object, a place or environment inevitably has an impact on our behaviour within or towards them/it. Where this has no direct or indirect impact on others or the social/legal contract within which we live, then we are free to behave as unique individuals. Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2000) talk about emotions in terms of a triad (emotion, motivation, cognition) and how these interact in response to everyday 'states' such as hunger or tiredness, which are usually satisfied through a common process such as eating or sleeping.

The emotional element of this trio responds to change in the environment or experience. For example, the emotion of fear if you are threatened resulting in the instinct of 'fight or flight'. A physiological change, such as sweating, pounding heart, agitation also takes place although whether this prompts the emotion (James-Lange Theory) or occurs simultaneously (Cannon-Bard Theory) remains in debate. Mayer et al (2000) suggest we interpret the feeling according to our understanding of available knowledge; *"ipsa scientia potestas est"* ("knowledge itself is power" - Sir Frances Bacon, 1597) and the interaction between these three elements forms an integrated model of personality, where EI features at the juncture of emotion and cognition. An emotion is therefore, understood as a feeling in response to something

or someone, that is interpreted according to what we know and subsequently shapes how we behave.

Intelligence (IQ) was initially understood as "high-level mental ability such as abstract reasoning" (Mayer et al, 2000, p.399) however the measurement of IQ is complex, mirroring the complexity of the individual and indeed human life. Thus, the resulting assessment of intelligence in its initial form was restrictive, excluding non-intellectual factors such as the working environment (Kumari & Pandey, 2011p. 161). Kumari and Pandey conclude that attitudes, for example, are contagious and are often widespread amongst a population of employees when they do not feel valued. This creates a negative working environment, a non-intellectual but powerful influence in the prediction of behaviour.

Mayer and Salovey (1993) discuss the rationale for labelling EI as an 'intelligence' rather than a 'competence', as based upon Gardner's (1983, p.239) idea of intrapersonal intelligence, "feeling life". In *Frames of the Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (2011), Gardner revolutionised the concept of intelligence, by suggesting that we, human beings, possess not the singular and academic intellect that we are frequently measured and characterised by, but several different intelligences. These are intrapersonal, the ability to understand 'self', the ability to recognise, appreciate and regulate one's own feelings, skilled self-reflectors who are attune with themselves and others emotions. In more recent years he has considered including existential and pedagogical intelligence, which he explained in his address at the University of Madrid, Spain (2011, p.3) as "the intelligence that

enables human beings to convey knowledge and skills to other human beings who have varying degrees of knowledge" (Gardner, 2011, p. 3).

Linking emotion and intelligence, Gardner's (1983) idea of intrapersonal intelligence asserts that rather than emotions necessarily having a damaging effect on our thinking and decision-making, they can assist us in circumventing over-sensitivity or desensitisation, anger or jealousy, or any other emotion that may influence our thinking and behaviour. Instead, it can help us utilise emotions in a positive or proactive manner. Likewise, he asserts how individuals could have the ability to 'read' others emotional states and negate, de-escalate, or re-direct them resulting in the same positive effect. Of course, each individual is unique. We have different levels of self-awareness. Some people are more attuned to their feelings than others' and some are more inclined to acknowledge how their feelings affect their judgement. Having a higher level of EI however, Gardner says, is necessary to reach full potential (success and productivity), and thus its development is worthwhile at both an individual and organisational level.

Being emotionally intelligent, is therefore, proposed by its advocates as a skill that can result in being more aware of your own and others feelings and more attune to the positive and negative attributes associated with them. Moreover, you will not only be able to recognise and empathise with others emotions, but also be able to express them in a meaningful way, supporting the emotional and/or mental health of the 'self' and others by navigating conflict and uncovering the biases that enhance the ability to critically think and analyse information. This may be particularly

powerful in times of emotional threat, or indeed, emotional vulnerability – when it is more likely that emotions influence thoughts and/or behaviour but when rational and objective decision-making is crucial.

There is ambiguity around the question of emotional rationality. Emotions, de Sousa (2001/1987, p.3) says are a type of "parallel philosophy", concerned with what gives life meaning by making sense of our ideas, understandings and how we behave because of them. However, an individual's experience does not always correlate with those observing them and can often seem unreasonable and/or irrational to those looking in. De Sousa explains this as the animal side of human feelings which has traditionally been perceived as irrational emotion, unjustified and nonsensical, characterising it as a 'species narcissism' that accepts humans are superior to beasts. Crimes of passion can be understood in this context, explained as committed at a time where a person has lost their ability to rationalise what they are feeling and acting impulsively. This can manifest as irrational behaviour that is often associated with something outside of the civility of human life and is acknowledged in English law through the Homicide Act 1957 S2 (2) as diminished responsibility, mitigating the intent, or *mens rea* of the offender.

The other side of this parallel philosophy de Sousa (2001/1987) defines as 'arational' emotions; feelings that are not based on or governed by logic but sensations such as involuntary twitches, ticks, pounding heart or stomach aches. These sensations can be felt by others experiencing arational emotions under similar circumstances. For example, the five stages of grief (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2014) are understood as

'normal', justifiable and reasonable emotional states, often used to explain (or excuse) subsequent behaviours post-bereavement. However, this philosophical stance is more difficult to justify or reasonably accept as an explanation for behaviour in other circumstances. Violence towards a partner due to feelings of jealousy, or the victims of such violence who fear the perpetrator enough not to leave, for example. de Sousa (2001/1987, p.6) suggests "the power of an emotion to motivate is independent of its own rationality", in other words, emotions that are used to base our assessments of rationality, whether or not they are rational themselves, can be used to explain how decisions can appear to lack logic or common sense.

In view of this, de Sousa (2001/1987) questions how we can be certain of our own emotions, what they mean and represent and how they shape our behaviour. He suggests we need to ask, how do we keep our emotions objective and thus the resulting behaviour free from subjective feelings? Although we share certain feelings or a process of feelings as outlined by Kuber-Ross and Kessler (2014), the subjectivity of their influence on our behaviour is a personal and ambiguous journey. Emotions can tell us things about the world but perhaps only the world of those who are experiencing them, where their symbolic meaning is associated with arational emotions; gut feelings.

In his book, *Gut Reactions* (Prinz, 2004, p.23), Prinz explains these seemingly arational emotions as "feelings without thinking" and using 'danger' as an example of how we understand an emotion should feel, what it constitutes and how it can be broken down into fragments - in the case of danger, potentiality and risk of harm.

This fragmentation would be a unique and subjective understanding of the global perception of danger which philosophically involves a hypothetical accumulation of other conceptual beliefs; "the conceptualisation hypothesis tacitly implies that emotions have rich conceptual structure" (2004, p.24). This stance sits within the realm of cognitive theory, where an individual would ascribe what Prinz describes as propositional attitudes; attitudes that derive from understandings relating to danger. For example, Mr X thinks that flying is dangerous, and therefore does not fly. His belief that flying is dangerous is based-upon the hearsay of others rather than his own lived experience; accumulated information from which he has hypothesised that if he flew, he would likely be in danger. Thus, he subconsciously attaches the emotion of fear to his idea of flying, "without thinking", without rationalising, what he feels or why he feels it. This suggests that emotions need not be real or a physical entity but triggered by thoughts of, in this case, what danger may come from flying rather than drawn from any true-life experience or reality. This is what Damasio (1999) referred to as a 'what-if' loop – the feelings Mr X imagines he *would* experience if he flew.

A possible explanation for the emotions associated with imaginary experiences is through the act of stereotyping. Gut feeling can be explained as a physical symptom of an emotion, likened to the concept of 'practical wisdom' that Eraut, (1994, p. 48) describes as knowledge based upon what we have learned. Mr X has learned, through the experiences of others, that flying is dangerous and imagining this danger manifests into a feeling that is both cognitive and physiological. How we interpret actions, concepts, or things we believe are dangerous, therefore, influences how we respond to the associated emotion. For Mr X, this is avoidance, however, aggression

or defensiveness are also possible behaviours. How rational the emotions are that these gut feelings are based upon is therefore important (Locke, 2005) and directly linked to tacit knowledge and subsequent behavioural responses.

### **The EI Ability Model**

Feelings and reasoning are often thought of as at opposite ends of the emotional spectrum (Payne, 1985; Mayer et al, 2000, p. 400). Belief that emotions communicate information about relationships implies that emotion and intellect can work effectively alongside each other – they reflect relationships between people, society, beliefs or a memory. EI refers to the recognition of, and meaning placed upon, patterns of emotions, how we use them to resolve problems and rationalise our solutions. So, why we feel happiness at our child's graduation or sadness at not achieving our own goals.

The Ability Model framed by Mayer and Salovey (1997) is a set of abilities that provide an explanation for the variance in individual's emotional perceptions and cognitions. They define four major skills areas; perception and expression of emotion, assimilating emotion in thought, understanding and analysing emotion and reflective regulation of emotion (1997, p.11). Each area builds upon the other reaching the fourth and highest level of EI, reflective regulation. The basic skills that form the first area, perception and expression of emotion, focuses attention on the ability to appraise the emotions of others, such as through facial expression (a smile or frown for example) (1997, p. 10-12). As they develop their skills, other factors to the facial expression are considered. For example, at first, a frown may be perceived as disapproval and prompt feelings of failure but through development, a frown may

also be perceived as confusion or misunderstanding, prompting different emotions and behaviour is modified accordingly. Contextualising emotions supports their assimilation, acknowledging that impact is as unique to the individual as their understanding of the world around them.

To be able to reason and understand our emotions and what influences how they impact on us mentally and behaviourally, appears under the understanding and analysis of emotion (1997, p.14). The fourth and highest level of EI, reflective regulation, involves our ability to control and manage not only our own emotions but those in others. Being able to de-escalate or alleviate anger in others (through skills such as active listening or acknowledging emotions) or adopting strategies to recognise and manage our own feelings (like deep breathing or walking away), so they do not impact on others (1997, p.15).

This model seeks to predict an individual's abilities to manage self and others and the implications therefore for their life-course. It also seeks to predict if someone has had an emotionally sensitive childhood, helping them to reframe any associated emotions into a positive reality, choose a good role model, openly communicate their feelings and develop emotionally intelligent knowledge. The empirical criteria for measurement is firstly, mental health problems have no right or wrong answers, secondly, the skills measured correlate with other measures of mental ability such as the capacity to learn and retain knowledge as well as reported empathy and thirdly, the assumption that ability raises with age.



The validity of the ability model's measurement tool (Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT)) is questioned by Miners, Côté and Lievens (2017, p.2). They highlight the limitations faced through self-reporting and the problem of ambiguity in the definition of EI between the differing schools of thought. However, they also question the lack of theoretical knowledge about validity itself, as the basis for psychometric testing. They argue that to validate methods used to determine the legitimacy of EI measurement outcomes, "it is necessary to describe the theoretical processes that intervene between the construct of EI and the responses to the items of a measure" (2017, p.3). To overcome this, they devised a "four-step systematic approach" that they assert supports the understanding of how any variation in the construct of EI may cause deviances in measurement results. The model attempts to bridge the gap in knowledge of psychometric theory that they suggest is lost in the complex practical application of testing EI, particularly the behavioural responses when assessing abilities. So rather than criticising the concept of EI as an intelligence, they have highlighted the challenges that arise in identifying the behavioural responses to it and offer a model that could provide a more effective method.

Locke (2005) however, questions the whole concept of EI as an intelligence or process for rationality; "the fundamental problem here is that one cannot reason with emotion". This is a contradiction in terms" (2005, p. 427). He suggests that emotions are a reflection of internal beliefs based on value-judgements and produce automatic reactions to external stimuli from which rational assessments are unreliable. Whilst Locke acknowledges that an individual does not have to act on their feelings, what he posits is that the skill of self-regulation to manage one's responses as proposed

by EI, rely upon rational and logical reasoning. So, rather than EI enabling self-regulation, it is about "being intelligent about emotions" (2005, p.427). Locke dismisses the idea of there being an 'EI', or indeed multiple intelligences as described by Gardener (1985, p.222) but rather a singular intelligence of an individual, defined as intellect, that can be applied to the many domains of life that once grasped, are referred to as abilities.

Despite its critics, Salovey & Mayer's (1990) model remains a credible concept. It is the only singular intelligence model, based on the paradigm of "a pure form of mental ability and thus as a pure intelligence" (Stys & Brown, 2004, p.4). Models developed since then are of a combination of cognitive skills and personality traits, described as mixed models.

### **EI Mixed Models**

Bar-On (2006), developed the EQ-i model over a period of 17 years, commencing in his PhD Thesis in 1988. He considers EI in terms of mixed intelligence that consist of cognitive abilities and personality traits and focuses on the well-being or mental health of the individual. The EQ-i employs a five-point scale that consists of 15 subscales (see figure 1.) used to measure the responses from 133 statements. Through a process of rigorous development, it explores the impact of demographic factors such as age, gender and ethnicity, and modified to suit different groups and situations, including businesses and organisations (Stys & Brown, 2004).

**Figure 1. The EQ-I Scales**

<b>EQ-I SCALES</b>	<b>The EI Competencies and Skills Assessed</b>
<b>Interpersonal</b> Self-regard Emotional self-awareness Assertiveness Independence Self-actualization	<b>Self-awareness and self-expression:</b> Accurately perceive, understand, and accept oneself Be aware of and understand one's emotions  Effectively and constructively express one's emotions and oneself Be self-reliant and free of emotional dependency on others Strive to achieve personal goals and actualize one's potential.
<b>Interpersonal</b> Empathy Social responsibility Interpersonal relationship	<b>Social awareness and interpersonal relationships:</b> Be aware of and understand how others feel Identify with one's social group and cooperate with others  Establish mutually satisfying relationships and relate well with others
<b>Stress Mgmt</b> Stress tolerance Impulse control	<b>Emotional management and regulation:</b> Effectively and constructively manage emotions Effectively and constructively control emotions
<b>Adaptability</b> Reality-testing Flexibility Problem-solving	<b>Change management:</b> Objectively validate one's feelings and think with external reality Adapt and adjust one's feelings and thinking to new situations Effectively solve problems of a personal and interpersonal nature
<b>General Mood</b> Optimism Happiness	<b>Self-motivation:</b> Be positive and look at the brighter side of life Feel content with oneself, others, and life in general

Retrieved from: <http://www.free-management-ebooks.com/fagpp/measuring-05.htm>

Bar-On (2006) considers EI and cognitive intelligence as equal contributors to an individual's general intelligence and the calculated score through the EQ-I, is indicative of their potential for success in all aspects of their life.

The connection between EI and workplace performance is demonstrated in six studies Bar-On has undertaken with others (Bar-On, 1997b, 2004; Bar-On, Handley & Fund, 2005; Handley, 1997; Ruderman & Bar-On, 2003). He quotes evidence of a significant relationship between abilities and traits, the most influential being self-awareness, the awareness of others, their feelings and needs, being able to manage emotions and be realistic, able to contextualise emotions (2006, p.15). Most interestingly, he also identifies a connection with high performance and an

individual's mental health, emphasising the well-being of the individual (happiness, feelings of self-fulfilment or actualisation) with a direct connectedness in their approach to daily activities. A positive approach to their interactions, as directly connected to their performance.

Goleman, most notably recognized for his book *Emotional Intelligence* (1995) and the subsequent application of EI in *The Emotional Intelligence of Leaders* in 1998 also focuses on cognitive ability and personality traits, however, the primary focus is on their influence in occupational performance. Rapidly gaining popularity with organisations, particularly in the business world during the 1990's (Cherniss & Goleman, 2001). Goleman (1998b) proposed the mixed intelligence model is a mind-set of "positive mental attitude" (Fineman, 2004, p.729) that is often found in successful leadership. He frames the model in terms of competences, personal and social, across five domains that shape self-awareness, self-regulation, social skills, empathy and motivation (see figure 2). Drawing on theoretical models of behaviour, emotion and communication, such as empathy and transactional analysis, Goleman suggests that the development of EI, will not only lead to the greater success of the individual but could support the individual increase success of those around them by embracing the personal and social aspects of intelligence.

**Figure 2. Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Model**

<b>Personal Competence (How We Handle Ourselves)</b>	<b>Social Competence (How We Handle Relationships)</b>
<b>Self-awareness:</b> knowing our internal states, preferences, resources, and intuitions. Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• emotional awareness</li> <li>• accurate assessment of our strengths and limits</li> <li>• self-confidence</li> </ul>	<b>Empathy:</b> having awareness of others' feelings, needs, and concerns. Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understanding others</li> <li>• developing others</li> <li>• anticipating and meeting others' needs</li> <li>• leveraging diversity</li> <li>• reading a group's emotional currents and power relationships</li> </ul>
<b>Self-regulation:</b> managing our internal states, impulses, and resources. Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• self-control of disruptive impulses</li> <li>• trustworthiness</li> <li>• conscientiousness</li> <li>• adaptability to change</li> <li>• comfort with new ideas and approaches</li> </ul>	<b>Social skills:</b> adeptness at inducing desirable responses in others. Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ability to influence others</li> <li>• clear communication</li> <li>• conflict management</li> <li>• leadership</li> <li>• ability to catalyze change</li> <li>• building bonds</li> <li>• collaboration and cooperation</li> <li>• ability to create group synergy</li> </ul>
<b>Motivation:</b> moving toward achievement of goals. Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• drive</li> <li>• commitment to a group's or organization's goals</li> <li>• initiative</li> <li>• optimism in spite of obstacles or setbacks</li> </ul>	<p><i>Adapted from Daniel Goleman, Working with Emotional Intelligence, pp. 26–27.</i></p>

In the chapter entitled 'The Managed Heart' (Goleman, 1998b, p. 80), he discusses how the action of emotional self-regulation can mean not only managing one's immediate emotions, but also "intentionally eliciting an emotion, even an unpleasant one" to succeed in the set objective. To achieve success, this elicitation has to be something that is willingly and skilfully provoked rather than demanded. It is the development of this and other emotional competencies he identifies that has been purported to be an integral leadership skill that in their book, *The Emotionally Intelligent Workplace*, Cherniss and Goleman (2001) promote as influential in

organisational effectiveness, by improving working relationships the organisational culture becomes stabilised and more productive.

In Waterhouse's (2006, p.218) original critique of EI, she states that Goleman's (1998b) model is based upon an inaccessible and unpublished private study undertaken for the Hay Group, and that the research that is available lacks clarity, supporting EI as either a single entity or as a set of defined abilities. She concludes that Goleman's five-domain concept of EI is too simplistic to be applied to an area of human psychopathy that is complex and unpredictable and that it merely invites the individual to believe that EI is the most important intelligence and can be successfully developed. This, she suggests, gives a false representation of the importance of EI and IQ, as superfluous.

Fineman (2004) warns that, "all emotional intelligence measures are based on author-contrived domains" and as such each response category reflects "its own, particular, rendition of emotional intelligence" (2007, p. 727-728). The positive mental attitude advocated by Goleman (1998b) as apparent in successful leadership incorporates enthusiasm, honesty and optimism with a range of other positive attributes alongside skills of empathy and self-confidence. Furthermore, Fambrough and Hart (2008, p. 746) advise the ECI-2 (Emotional Competence Inventory) a 360-degree tool designed to measure the emotional competencies of both individuals and organisations, neglects to separate the five dimensions of Goleman's model from other leadership qualities.

Nevertheless, Goleman's (1998b) model has stood the test of time, becoming ever more popular not just the business world, but appearing in articles and debates which have swept academia and appeared in the training delivered to a variety of organisations (Cleveland & Fleishman, 2006, preface), including more recently, to a police area who participated in this research (Hill, 2016). This has extended to the mass media, for example, Selker (2014), a performance management consultant, who originally reported in the PA Times (American Society for Public Administration) on the shootings of Michael Brown and Tamir Rice in the USA, advocates the benefit of EI development in police officers. In his article, he suggests if the officers had had a higher level of EI, they may have been in a better position to recognise, understand and respond to the high-stress of both situations that ultimately led to the death of the victims. In other words, a more developed EI could have led to a different interaction/thinking/response thus decision, at a time of crisis. He suggests the conversation about EI and police work is "long overdue" (Selker, 2014), and its development should form an integral part of police training at all levels.

### **Why Goleman? - EI and Police Decision-Making**

Goleman's (1998b) model was used in this research, due to its multifaceted perspective of EI as a tool for success, somewhat similar to the holistic approach needed for effective policing. Goleman's work, has demonstrated how the different competencies are beneficial in the many areas of white-collar organisations and industry. In recent years, this has become apparent in policing (Saville, 2006: Hill, 2016). Saville points out that EI has been part of PBL (Problem-Based Learning) training in some parts of the USA for several years. He discusses how the training

can support officers to develop competences in identifying emotional triggers to violence, how to self-regulate their own emotional state, particularly during stressful situations, and how to be more considerate of their own mood and attitudes towards not only the public, but their colleagues as well. Something that Selker (2014) would likely support. Saville (2006) refers to research by Druskat, Mount and Sala (2005), that suggests a significant improvement in EI can have a long-term positive impact on performance. As previously mentioned, one researched police area had had a two-day event in EI using Goleman's (1998b) model, evidence that the force, at least in that area, has begun to invest in the value of EI as a supplementary skill for operational police officers.

### **The Symbolism of Emotion**

At the beginning of this literature review, the historic use of symbols, as a means of communication and understandings, was discussed and contextualised. According to Hewitt and Shulman (2011, p.33), symbols are a means of navigating our physical and geographic environment and are "important aspects of interaction with others". However, they also help us navigate the internal psychology of the self and others. Life can be a complicated journey and understanding our emotions as we travel through a combination of collective and individual symbolic interpretations, difficult at best. Crying, for example, has an attributed meaning of sadness, but also happiness. Shouting a meaning of anger or shouting for joy. This dichotomy of meanings to behaviours means that a more insightful understanding of symbols needs to be understood if we are to interact with each other in a worthwhile way.



SI is interested in how people interpret symbols and respond to them in a meaningful way, rather than the conditioned response of learned or biologically determined behaviour. George Herbert Mead (1863 – 1931), is one of the three founders of SI (Meltzer, Petras and Reynolds, 1975; Reynolds, 2003). Mead was interested in language, particularly gestures, as symbols of verbal or written communication. He believed that signs are only tangible symbols if they can prompt a reaction and human beings are able to do this because they employ a "higher level of social complexity" (Hewitt & Shulman, 2011, p.34) communicating not just with each other on a one-to-one basis, but also in or to, larger groups.

A socially constructed sign such as hand signals are what social interactionists refer to as symbols, signals that have collectively understood meanings. For example, hand gestures as a greeting are a wave or handshake, or to abuse, like the two-fingered sign. Hand gestures can differ across cultures however. The thumbs-up sign, for example, is a symbol that all is "good" in Western society such as the USA or UK but has a derogatory meaning in Greece. Language is the most important symbol in human interaction (Hewitt & Shulman, 2011) although it often has no 'sound' significance with what it is describing. "Car", for example, has no sound bearing on a vehicle that can travel at speeds, so its meaning is only understood by those who speak English.

This ambiguity in language meaning is also apparent in the words we use for emotions. As identified earlier, crying can have more than one meaning and the sound of the word "crying" has no sound bearing on the act of crying. SI, however,

explains how meanings attached to symbols, such as language, can evoke emotions and corresponding behaviour. In other words, the sound of the word "cry" or "cry" in its written format has a symbolic meaning of sadness or tears of joy. The environmental or situational context of "crying" helps us to distinguish which meaning to attach to it and the emotion associated with it.

The two other main founders of SI are Charles Horton Cooley and William Isaac Thomas. Cooley "was one of the first generation of North American sociologists, and one of the first to pioneer the (then unnamed) theory of SI" (Plummer, 1996, p. 226 cited by Reynolds, 2003, p.59). He focused his work on the development of the self in the preparatory, play and game stages of the childhood years. He proposed each human interaction has an impact on the development of the self, regardless of who they are or in what relational capacity. This is what Cooley (1864 – 1929) defined as the "looking glass self"; the self is derived from the social interactions with others, defined by the perspectives of those around them. Cooley realised the idea of multiple roles, the 'I' and the 'me', and how others defined us may be different according to their role and intimacy.

Thomas (1883 – 1947), however, focused on the concept of social disorganisation and 'the definition of the situation' concept (Reynolds, 2003, p. 65) to explain the development of self-identity. He highlighted how meanings of situations were real only to the actors in it and their reality, dependent upon their approach to it. At bedtime for instance, a child who believes in monsters, may suffer nightmares even though the monsters are not real. They are real to the child and therefore have real

consequences. Nightmares. A child who does not believe in monsters may sleep soundly. Cooley's theorem "if a person perceives a situation as real, it is real in its consequences" is thus at the heart of SI.

Of all three founders, Mead's work, *Mind, Self and Society* (1934) interpreted and published posthumously by Blumer, one of his students, is regarded by most symbolic interactionists as the most influential (Blumer, 1986/1969; Meltzer, Petras & Reynolds, 1975). Blumer, who coined the term SI in 1938 (Carter & Fuller, 2015, p.2) proposed Mead's work on social interaction was set around three tenets;

- Behaviour towards people or things, is shaped by the meanings we have for them
- Meanings are derived from social interactions
- These meanings are modified through a process of individual interpretation

Like Cooley and Thomas, Mead's perspective suggests, that individual behaviour is socially constructed. Contradictory to previous schools of thought in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, of biologically predestined or predisposed behaviour, Mead proposed a continuous cyclical model of social interaction using a phylogenetic framework, mapping the impact of relationships between others and society, based on their interpretations of physical and linguistic symbols (Meltzer, Petras and Reynolds, 1975, p.2). This type of ancestral mapping suggests an interconnectedness between individuals and society, where one defines the other and needs to comprehend the other. They have therefore, a mutually interdependent relationship, a holistic rather than two-dimensional correspondence that interactionists suggest links the individual's reality with the society in which they live. This is reflective of Cooley's

idea of the reality of situations, where human existence is determined by but is also determinate of, what Mead referred to as 'sociality'; "social interaction forms human conduct" (Blumer, 1986/1969, p.8) in a process of interpretation, introspective understandings and reflections that consider not only the self, but situational context.

SI in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has manifested in several different directions. This is due to the lack of evidential support for Mead's work, as his ideas were never methodologically tested. New schools of thought, namely Iowa and Indiana emerged in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century through the work of Kuhn (1964) and then Stryker (1980) both of whom took a positivistic stance to SI, moving away from the qualitative approach of Blumer (Carter & Fuller, 2015). In particular, Stryker's (1980) work expanded the idea of 'role-taking' that Mead had proposed through social interaction. He suggested that, "in taking the attitudes of others in a situation, an individual uses 'symbolic cues' built from prior experiences" (1980, p.4), adopting Mead's idea of reflexivity in reciprocal learning; individuals reflectively apply what they believe others expect from them in terms of their behavioural responses. In doing so, individuals internalise these expectations and this shapes their identity.

Stryker (1980) developed structural role theory that empirically tested Mead's ideas by statistically analysing others' attitudes towards an individual's responses. He concluded that individuals identify 'self' in terms of the structure of social context (Stryker, 1980; Stryker, 2008; Stryker & Burke, 2000; Stryker, Owens & White, 2000). Stryker's view rests on behaviour being organised through the symbolic designation of the whole environment, physical and social but most importantly, the

meanings attached to the attitudes of those who occupy the upper echelon of the social hierarchy. This broad understanding encompasses not only the social symbol of self but also the influence of demographics, personality traits and cultural and religious factors. A person can therefore identify with several roles for example, being single, a professional, male or female, Christian or Buddhist. By identifying attitudinal patterns, he suggested predictions could be made of future behaviour. In his work with Burke (Stryker & Burke, 2000) he highlighted the link between behaviour and self-identity as the shared meanings of these attitudes, meanings that are based on the emotions related to experiences, innate or learned responses to our environment that shape our beliefs and subsequent attitudes.

Stryker and Burke (2000, p.288) propose that the structural role model perceives emotions in two ways; as a product of self-perception against identity standard (what it means to be who they are in any given situation) but also as impacting upon the individual who feels the emotion and others around them who experience the “outward expressions of the individuals state”. This is supported by the work of Deonna and Teroni (2015) in their paper *Emotions as Attitudes* where they claim “emotions are distinct evaluative attitudes” (2015, p. 293) and feeling an emotion towards a person, object or situation has consequences in shaping our perspective of it. Arguably, therefore, attitudes are associated with emotions and Stryker’s (1980) SI perspective includes the emotions of the individual and subsequently, the collective.

## **Symbolism in the Police**

In a review of police culture in the Netherlands, van Hulst (2013) purports the act of storytelling as an everyday and essential practice of police officers, that upholds values and beliefs that contribute to the shaping of self-identity. This, he suggests, helps them make sense of their experiences and police practice, a reflective process of responses and decision-making that supports the maintenance and cohesiveness of group identity. What this act of storytelling does not notably involve, however, is the emotions associated with policing or the storyteller (2013, p.635). van Hulst reports that although stories with associated strong emotions were discussed in interviews, they did not form part of the everyday storytelling in the canteen.

This draws us to consider the symbolic attitudes that create police officer's collective meanings about crime, situations and people (most specifically offender and victim) and the impact upon the subcultural design of 'cop culture' as a group identity (Reiner, 2010; van Hulst, 2013). The omission of feelings in the stories shared with their peers, is symbolic in itself, of a body of professionals who are traditionally male and who occupy a role that is perceived as masculine (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). The omission of feelings retains the officers' external resilience by not exposing themselves as vulnerable, perceived as feminine, but that falls within the rigid typology of masculinity. In doing so, the stereotypical meaning of masculinity remains a symbolic characteristic of police culture (Fielding, 2018, p.182).

Reiner (2010) describes the core characteristics of 'cop culture' as themes of cohesion that bond those together who commit to not just a job, but a whole way of

life that is based in principles of victim safety, protecting "the weak against the predatory" (2010, p.119). What Flosi (2016) refers to as the 'thin blue line'; a symbol of duality used by outsiders as a mechanism for creating negative ideas about cop culture as corruptive and shielding "nefarious deeds" but to police officers, as code of solidarity and commitment to each other. This subcultural bond can subsequently isolate officers from 'normal' social life, creating an even greater sense of solidarity between members but further isolation from the community they serve and entrenched attitudes towards certain groups of offenders and victims, unchallenged.

Loftus (2012) too explores the notion of solidarity and isolation and how loyalty between officers from certain shifts or departments, came together to secure a cohesive defence against possible abuse or hostility. This hostility can originate not only from the public but also from colleagues in the force, developing "an in-group perspective [that] can encourage the protection of colleague infringements of procedure" (2012, p. 120). This is what Manning (1978) characterised, as part of a secretive community, that actively engages in deception through storytelling that would routinely involve lies and omissions. Omissions in storytelling were also characteristic of van Hulst's (2013) findings some 35 years later, where the officer omitted to include their feelings from stories told to colleagues. This would inevitably influence the meanings the recipient attaches to the story "as stories are often triggered by other stories, the meaning of police work can implicitly become a topic itself" (2013, p.636). Omissions, therefore, can also shape the cultural meaning of policing and symbolic understandings.

The implications of this are highlighted by Reiner (2010, p.123 - 124) where, learned and established attitudes and understandings, can have a serious impact on police practice. Officers living and working within a subcultural existence, who share the same understandings, cultural behaviours and psychological traits, may not be able or willing to recognise, nor decipher the complexities associated with the victims and perpetrators, particularly whose lifestyle is attributed to what Reiner (2010) refers to as the 'rubbish' key-group of police relevancy. One of seven key groups, 'rubbish' is symbolic of an attitude towards those crime victims who are considered not worthy of police time or cause their own victimisation and "domestic disputes are a common sort of call traditionally regarded as 'rubbish' by many police officers" (2010, p.124). It is this type of cultural thinking that influences practice and that was discovered in a research project *A Heartfelt Decision? Exploring Emotional Intelligence in Police Officer Decision Making at Domestic Violence Incidents* (Eason, 2016), where some officers reported arresting under the positive action policy a waste of time and resources and there was often little or no reward for spending any amount of time with a victim.

These cultural attitudes are also highlighted in the PEEL Report (HMIC, 2015, pp.14-15) which found inconsistency and disorganisation in many forces in terms of risk assessment (both THRIVE at point of call and DASH post incident) and DV awareness. Most symbolic, however, was the "limited evidence of victim engagement" (2015, p.17) with risk assessments being undertaken over the telephone or not at all. This is indicative of an attitude that does not understand either the importance of risk assessment or the vulnerability of the victim. Or it is possibly symptomatic of the continued dismissal of DV as blameworthy and time-



consuming crime, with little positive outcomes, a cultural belief that influences both the individual and the structural attitudes of policing, politics and public perception (Thompson, 2016). With fewer officers available (Hargreaves, Husband & Lineham, 2018), this negative attitude towards DV, DV victims and associated risk assessment will inevitably result in it occupying the 'rubbish' category (Reiner, 2010), seen as encroaching on the limited time available for perceived *genuine* crime incidents and entrenching negative perceptions.

This conventional account of police culture being characterised by negativity, is challenged by Loftus (2012, p.15) who questions the conceptualisation of police culture as monolithic and singly determined. She instead supports the idea of multiple subcultures within police culture, as put forward by others such as Foster (2003) and Manning (2007). Simply put, rather than the somewhat deterministic approach implied through the 'acculturation process' (Loftus, 2012, p.16) she discusses the three hierarchical subcultures proposed by Manning (2007) that are rank orientated; "command, middle management, and lower participants" (Loftus, 2012, p.16). Manning (2007) proposed that when exploring police culture from within, conflict in values and attitudes, and interactional tensions between the organisational dynamics of rank and authority, create specific meanings to officers according to their position. The strength of influence is in accordance to their hierarchal status, rather like that of Stryker's (1980) structural role theory and the contagion of attitudes symbolic of each subcultural norm.

How officers view their role, therefore, is representative of these subcultural meanings and thus “underpins and informs conduct” (Loftus, 2012, p.90) whilst also acknowledging a host of other divergences, such as roles (detective, police constable) and policing styles (community, intelligence-led). In other words, the subcultural layers are a complex environment, full of diversities such as rank and style, but also age, gender, length of service and knowledge base. She also questions the notion of isolation from the broader scope of criminal justice and the community suggesting that the assumed insularity of police culture, rather than isolating them, forms a vital part of their support mechanism in a profession very different from any other. Without doubt, the influence of professional peers’ through the ‘acculturation process’ forms part of individual officer’s learning and understanding of practice and in terms of DV, the how, the why and way in which it should be dealt with. But what Loftus (2012, p.17) points out, is that there is a distinct difference between the orthodox understanding of police culture that does not take into account these divergences but adopts the symbolic meaning associated with “canteen culture” (values and beliefs through storytelling and off-duty chatter). “Cop culture” on the other hand, is defined by professional conduct and discourse that can be described in a more positive and acceptable light.

In a paper by Gunkel, Schlagel and Engle (2013), they concluded that culture has express influence on EI regardless whether a positive or negative emotion. Their research tested the influence of cross-cultural values of individual EI. It aimed to explore how multi-cultural dimensions influence the EI of those in organisations who work with a diverse range of national and international teams and sought to understand how they communicated meaning associated with those emotions. What

they found was EI levels differed in three specific areas namely long-term orientation, collectivism and uncertainty avoidance and to maximise the efficiency of team members, recognition and acknowledgement of cultural influences are necessary for individual EI development. If applied to sub-cultural influences such as 'cop-culture' and/or 'canteen-culture', then it assumed their influence is present in the interaction of officers with the public who are increasingly from multi-cultural backgrounds. Likewise, the internal blame culture must also have some influence. The collective feelings around blame within the police, according to this philosophy, will have an influence in how EI is used and developed in DV decision-making and given these are of negative feelings of blame, it would follow that they might deplete the desire for autonomous and EI informed decision-making that would benefit more than blanket policy.

In the HMICFRS (2018) *State of Policing Annual Review*, DV has reportedly increased by 88%, since June 2013 to 500,000 a year. This equates to an incident being committed every minute (2018, p. 21) although there was evidence that some forces were still not recording domestic crimes accurately due to the pressure of performance targets and lack of time due to dwindling resources. It also reports indications of a change in culture, to that where the officer feels empowered, ethical decision-making is encouraged and one that is adapting to change. In the most recent PEEL report (HMICFRS, 2018) there is a noted improvement of the way in which DV is dealt with. Nevertheless, there were concerns raised about the continued lack of successful prosecutions, of information gathering towards service improvement and simply, consistency in the effective use of protective powers including positive arrest and civil orders. Indeed, rather than responding to a

reported incident with the urgency it required, some forces were making appointments with victims. This is clearly indicative of a lack of understanding about the nature of DV and the risks involved and consequently being classified as a 'volume crime', a low-priority who are most likely to be attended by a non-specialist officer.

Thus, it appears that despite efforts to monitor and guide the development of DV awareness and the implementation of provisions in place to improve the cultural understanding and handling of DV crime, there remains an indifference to its importance or priority. There has been additional guidance issued by the College of Policing in, *Modernising neighbourhood policing guidelines (2018)* which advocates the promotion of the "right culture" to build confidence and trust with all stakeholders and support in taking an evidence-based approach to policing. This would certainly support "organisational effectiveness" as outlined by Cherniss and Goleman, (2001) however there is still little or no evidence of involving emotions or EI as part of that cultural development.

## **Summary**

There has been a lot of rhetoric since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century around the improvement and professionalisation of the police (Fielding, 2018), particularly in terms staff recruitment and development and of dealing with invisible crime like DV. Goleman and Cherniss (2001) introduced the idea of organisational culture and the positive impact EI has on the way in which organisations operate, staff well-being and performance and Saville (2006) and Daus and Ashkanasy (2005) have both

pointed out how these benefits can increase efficiency in police practice. The new 2020 vision for professionalising police through undergraduate study presents the opportunity for EI to be part of the professionalisation process however, despite the College of Policing emphasising the positive impact of EI, particularly empathy, this does not appear to disseminate to further developmental strategies or guidance. Indeed, the 'cop culture' discussed by Reiner (2010) and van Hulst (2013) points towards the informal setting of storytelling and subcultural cohesion as the most influential in symbolic values, meanings and perceptions; both the collective and subsequently, the individual.

DV is a complicated and sensitive crime, which makes the decision-making about risk at times of crisis, an even greater hurdle. Response officers, although not high in rank, are the most likely to attend an DV incident and thus, arguably, take the lead on decision-making about risk that must not only consider the safeguarding of the victim(s) but also fulfil the legislation and policy framework that boasts an evidence-base of best practice. Effective leadership, according to Goleman (1998a), requires a high level of EI and yet its inclusivity in police training and development is sparse at best. EI assists the interpretation of the symbolic framework within which we live our social and professional lives and therefore is, an essential element in ensuring meanings are accurate and informed. This research has explored how or if EI is present in these decisions and if so, what impact it has in terms of outcome. What has emerged are four themes that explain both the presence and problems of employing EI in DV police decision-making at DV incidents.

## Chapter 2 Methodology

### Why this? Why now?

After many years of service, I left Probation in 2011 to take a lecturing role in an applied criminal justice programme that predominantly taught prospective and serving police officers. I chose this role because having worked alongside officers in the field within the realm of public protection I often wondered what informed their decision-making. As a trained probation officer who had undertaken a gruelling two-year programme of an undergraduate degree in Community and Criminal Justice, a Dip/PS and managing a small caseload, I found it fascinating, if not frustrating, that a frontline police officer was able to make decisions about risk and dangerousness without similar training. Taking the role therefore gave me the opportunity to share theoretical knowledge and practical skills with the police officers of the future.

At this time, most officers had undertaken training through CENTREX (Central Police Training and Development Authority), which was later subsumed by the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA). The training included workshops such as the supporting of witnesses, arrest and detain, interview techniques and managing conflict within the policing context (Central Police Training and Development Authority, 2005). The College of Policing (2017b) now has oversight and training includes other areas such as equality and diversity, the National Decision Making Model and Unarmed Defence Tactics. However, despite the perpetual change in training provision and its oversight, there continues to be a lack of criminological learning about crime and criminality that would increase the knowledge and

understanding of offenders and crime victims and inform decision-making in accurate risk assessment.

This was particularly apparent when dealing with DV incidents. In both practice and lecturing experience, I observed limited understanding around interpersonal violence and a lack of empathy when dealing with victims. In July 2015, I conducted a small-scale study as part of the Advanced Research Techniques module of the Professional Doctorate programme, exploring influences on officer's decision-making in risk assessments of domestic incidents. The pilot study focused on the use of professional discretion when completing the DASH (Domestic Abuse Stalking and Honour-based Violence) risk assessment tool. In analysis of this data, the impact of EI on decision-making at DV incidents emerged. As White (2017, p.33) suggests, "Professionals and practitioners often draw on their own experience in the workplace when thinking about ideas for research" and the outcomes of the pilot were of great interest. I had not considered investigating the concept of EI in policing before and the officers' awareness and response to it, was surprising. This was the motivating factor for me to continue the research as a larger project with specific focus on EI in police practice.

There is currently dedicated training in the form of CPD (Continued Professional Development) for those who join the specialist units (College of Policing, 2017b), but it is the frontline officers who attend incidents and make those initial, and often vital risk assessments and they only attend basic training on this type of offence. The proposed 2020 vision of the College of Policing that all new recruits must undertake

an undergraduate or specialist apprenticeship route of education, is thus a welcomed transition and something I hoped this research would contribute to in terms of knowledge and curriculum. Undertaking evidence-based learning in areas such as DV will ensure all officers engage in a period of learning that will support their understanding and interaction with those involved.

## **Aims and Objectives**

The overall aim of this research was to explore how or if police officers employ EI in their decision-making at DV incidents and whether or not it supports effective risk assessment and long-term protection of the victim. The literature, suggests there are many benefits in developing individual and institutional EI and that this forms an element of training for police officers at senior level in England and Wales. But the benefits of a heightened level in EI domains for all individuals, could equip them with skills such as self-regulation and objectivity, both of which are considered as fundamental to the role of frontline police officers (Saville, 2006) who make difficult and often life-threatening decisions on a daily basis.

There are three main strands to the approach of this research. The idea of decision-making benefiting from 'gut feelings' or EI, was notionally established in a pilot study conducted earlier in the doctorate programme. This forms the first stream of enquiry, which I approached with the assumption that EI can be an active ingredient in police practice and wanted to establish officers understanding and value of it. The second strand focused on the concept of decision-making, in particular the application of EI within the structured framework of the positive action strategy and the use of



professional discretion in terms of risk assessment and management at DV incidents. The third explored with the participants, ways in which EI could be integrated into training and other academic learning that will support police officers' development at any stage of their career and how it could be applied in the understanding and operational setting of DV. The three questions designed to explore the objectives were:

- 1) How would you respond to your 'gut feeling' when attending a DV incident?
- 2) How does this influence your decision-making within the framework of the Positive Action Strategy?
- 3) Why might developing your EI support your understanding of and ability to assess DV incidents more effectively?

These questions formed the final structure of the interview schedule (Appendix 1) and the direction of the literature review.

## **Research Paradigms**

With little or no literature available on the use of EI in police decision-making, the research took the form of a qualitative, exploratory study, teasing out understandings through the funnelling of questions (Robson, 2011, p.82) from a broad starting point through the narrowing shift of specificity as the research progressed. To achieve this, the research took an inductive approach, grounded theory, developing ideas and theories that emerged and applied to the decision-making practice of the police. This

approach offered a preliminary insight into the socially constructed rhetoric of individual experiences, feelings and interpretations contextualised within subcultural understandings of the police and their collective meanings or 'truths'.

In the pursuit of individual and collective truth, interpretivism has its roots in Max Weber's (1864-1920) *Verstehen*, the study of "meaningful social action" (Krueger & Neuman, 2006, p. 77), which explores individual feelings, motivation or reasoning that shape and inform their actions. The fundamental understanding of the interpretivist approach is that the social world exists as people perceive it and this perception and their experience of it, gives it meaning. Truth. How they interact with their social reality is based upon these meanings or 'truths' and is perpetuated through constant interaction and communication with each other and the social environment. These interactions reinforce meanings and the responses to them.

The construction of social life is based upon assumed rather than factual knowledge about the environment and those within it. It is this "subjective sense of reality" (Krueger & Neuman, 2006, p. 79) that Krueger and Neuman suggest is important for researchers to acknowledge and explore in depth, if they are to understand social reality from other's points of view. The shifting nature of social reality and the meanings attributed to it are, according to Krueger and Neuman, influenced by external behaviours. These are identified as gestures (such as a hand signal) sounds (an alarm or spoken greeting) or the observed actions of others and we can only begin to understand the subjective meanings, once we begin to understand the individual's interpretation of them and their impact.

Interpretive epistemology is associated with the symbolic interactionist and the qualitative method of research. Qualitative research seeks to explore the underlying meaning of individual understandings and behaviours rather than the statistical analysis involved in attempting “to quantify the social world” (Crowther-Dowey & Fussey, 2013, p. 22) by measuring the frequency or standard deviation of text or action as variables. Based upon a phenomenological position, it takes a holistic approach to the context of human experience at a particular time or in a particular setting. The nature of qualitative research is the inductive approach to understanding relationships between theoretical concepts and research (Bryman, 2008, p.366) that focus on the identification of themes, to provide a conceptual understanding of a problem rather than the proving or disproving of a hypothesis. This approach can be particularly valuable when investigating a little known sub-culture like the police force, as it strives to access the internal world and perceptions of those who populate it.

When discussing ethnographic studies of police culture, Cosgrove and Francis (2011, p. 204) report that these have revealed how police officers hold "specific cultural attitudes, values and beliefs" due to occupational challenges. Whilst they suggest that officers do not purposefully create subcultural barriers, professional discretion and statutory power afforded to them by the State, results in their construction of a collective 'understanding' that is often referred to as 'cop culture'. 'Cop culture' (Reiner, 2000, 2010) is a complex subculture and often 'guarded' by those 'inside', making difficult to infiltrate or understand (Chan, 1996; Cosgrove & Francis, 2011; Jones, Newburn & Reiner, 2017; Loftus, 2012). Loftus (2012, p.19) explains this complexity in terms of subcultural dimensions. She suggests these

dimensions are structured through the ambiguity of operational discretion, decision-making that is practiced away from the supervisory sight of the organisation and embedded in behavioural and attitudinal understandings, understandings that are symbolic of the confrontational element of policing; dealing with crime, criminality and the consequences of often traumatic incidents. These experiences and cognitive understandings form the fundamental cohesiveness of police culture.

Subcultural identity, such as that of police culture, is proposed by Tajfel and Turner (1979) in social identity theory, as the social categorisation, identification and comparison to others, that define an individual's membership of a group (the 'insider') and shared meanings that can only be understood by other group members. For example, the perceived prejudice and discrimination that is synonymous with offenders/the public's rhetoric of the police (Jones, Newburn & Reiner, 2017). This shared identity and experience of discrimination, explains their reluctance to participate in research about policing by someone who is not part of their group (an 'outsider'). This is especially so where the research has been commissioned by the Government who then use the results to criticise them. Reiner (2000, p. 220-224) talks about the relationship of the researcher and the police in similar terms; the *inside insider*, an active police officer undertaking ethnographic research, the *outsider insider*, officers due to leave or have left the police service and then, the *outside outsider* – the academic or other commissioned research bodies (the College of Policing). The latter, of course, would be the category under which I fall and, according to Reiner, is the most problematic.

Due to the speculation around 'cop culture' and the problems of researching such a 'closed' community, it was felt that using a qualitative approach would provide a forum through which officers could recount their experiences and knowledge to an 'outsider' in a way in which they felt they had control of the outcomes (Bryman, 2008, p. 159). Rather than using a quantitative survey that might be thought of as a number crunching exercise, offering response choices that may be perceived as restrictive and importantly, researcher led (2008, p.393), the qualitative interview would allow the officer the flexibility to disclose what *they* believe is important, taking control and 'driving' the findings of the study. Nevertheless, quantitative methodology and the positivist paradigm, whilst preoccupied with refining measurement tools, causality and replicability, has many positive elements.

The pursuit of objectivity, which is central to positivism, is demonstrated in how data is collected and assembled in a way that can generalise human behaviour (May, 2001). Positivists agree that to understand the social world, 'facts' that are independent of subjective meaning can be collected and plotted into patterns and trends that provide meaning and are predictive of human behaviour. As May (2001, p. 11) puts it, "much as the ruler measures distance and the clock, time" positivism measures the causes and effects of behaviour; which variable triggers which behaviour. For example, if you touch the oven and burn yourself, you do not touch it again, without protection. A learned behaviour and a behaviour that is statistically predictable.

What this approach does not consider however, is the thinking behind the action or non-action. Is there another reason why you would not touch the oven again?

Perhaps you have you been instructed not to? What quantitative data captures is the frequency of structured inquiry that can deduce whether or not what you thought or hypothesised is true or false – a person would not touch the oven again without protection because it was hot. It can generate a much higher quantity of data, which can be analysed using computer software such as SPSS (Statistical Analysis Software) that codes and categorises responses to show ratings in causal relationships between different variables and control groups (Bryman 2008, p. 156). Current technology facilitates the analysis of variables so efficiently that we produce data in vast quantities, studies replicated and generalisations are made quickly and impactfully. One such methodology, RCT (Randomised Control Trials) are becoming increasingly popular in policing research in the drive to provide a robust evidence-base to policing initiatives (Ariel, 2019; Scantlebury et al, 2017) that are set within a methodology of mathematical objectivity (Strang and Sherman, 2012).

The RCT approach was not appropriate for this research project, as it was exploratory rather than comparative, although cannot be discounted for any future development of the topic. A purely quantitative study was also not felt suitable, not in silo, however, it was considered as part of a mixed-methods approach (Bryman, 2008; Flick, 2007; Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2015; Morse & Niehaus, 2009) that is recognised as a third research paradigm. Johnson et al (2015, p.113) explain mixed methods as "a synthesis that includes ideas from qualitative and quantitative research" reducing uncertainty in interpretation by bringing together multiple measures to ensure validity.

This was termed triangulation (Denzin, 1978/2012) and taking a mixed-method approach, a way of achieving this by supporting the thematic analysis with statistical evidence, reinforcing identified qualitative themes. Denzin called this between-method triangulation; capturing the different dimensions of the same phenomena. Bias and value-judgements, are deemed eliminated, when different sources of data, methods and researcher are used and "the result will be a convergence upon the 'truth' about some social phenomenon" (Denzin, 1978, p.14). As social scientists, Denzin proposed that there should be a variability in the research process and the analysis of the two methods provide comparable and interconnected data. He suggests that the symbolic interactionists approach provides the theoretical framework that can converge relevance's and meaning, to construct a social reality that will help "reduce the gap between theory and method" (Denzin, 1978, p.6).

This is also apparent in the work of Johnson et al (2015, p.124) who attempt to explain mixed methods as a qualitative-quantitative continuum, that can be designed in different models according to the research needs. For example, a pure mixed-method model with equal status placed on each paradigm or a qualitative or quantitative dominant model where the researcher relies more on one philosophical approach. In adopting both methodologies, the researcher is able to take a multi-dimensional view of the topic and extend theoretical knowledge.

The initial model adopted for this research was the qualitative dominant model, a social constructionist application to the project, using quantitative data analysis as a means for comparison (Flick, 2007, p. 9). The qualitative data would be collated

through interviews (method) that I (the researcher) conducted and the quantitative data, through the Bristol Online Survey (researcher) using the survey method which includes a range of different types of closed, open and Likert style questions. The higher quantity statistical data gathered across the police population, would confirm the collective meanings attributed to the three elements of the study (EI, DV and police decision-making) and the thematic outcomes.

There are those who oppose the idea of triangulation and its value in terms of validity, however. Flick (2007, p. 9) posits that triangulation is, in fact, an alternative strategy to validation and asks: "should we simply and pragmatically mix methods? Or should we look at combining the approach to the research at a more strategic level?" Others, too, question the compatibility of the two paradigms. Morse and Niehaus (2009) for example, warn of the danger of randomly mixing methods and Bryman (2008, p. 624) points out, like any single method research, it may not withstand challenge if it is poorly conducted. Not all researchers are skilled in both methods collection techniques and the integration of two or more sets of results can be technical, costly and time-consuming. Thus, although using the mixed methods approach may appear to provide validity to the study, it should not be undertaken just to satisfy confidence in triangulation. The method used should be the most appropriate to answer the research question and the theoretical approach of the research. It should also align with the capabilities of the researcher and consider other limitations such as, time, cost and how it engages the participants to discover their "truth".



Prior to working in the criminal justice sector, I had worked in accounting for many years, predominantly in financial planning and am quite skilled at analysing numerical data. So, in addition to being a trained interviewer, I felt very capable in taking a mixed method approach to my research. However, after conducting the first part of the field research, time was taken to reflect on the process and I realised in the conducting of the interviews, that I had not only recorded the rhetoric, but the tones, body language and contextual data that surrounded them; a naturalistic approach (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Furthermore, the data I had collated was overwhelming in its volume and detail. It was at this time of reflection that I decided to defer the quantitative element of the research and take a purely qualitative approach.

This was a difficult decision for four reasons. The first centred on the ideological understanding, that only through the support of empirical analysis could the thematic findings of the interviews be validated and that triangulation could only be effectively achieved, through the collation and synthesis of both qualitative and quantitative data. As Patton (2002) remarked, multiple methods that gathered both types of data are required to generate and/or test a theory. By removing the quantitative element of the questionnaire, I felt I was invalidating the results. Secondly, I was concerned that the police areas that had agreed to take part might object to the change; the police may also feel that the interview data lacked validity without statistical backing. Thirdly, I was unsure whether such a significant change was possible when ethical approval was according to the original research proposal.

The final difficulty, and perhaps the most important in my journey as a doctorate researcher, was the feeling of failure. I was concerned that by not completing the research as originally proposed it would be unsubstantial, not enough to warrant a doctoral thesis. However, the discovery of 'naturalistic inquiry' (Athens, 2010; Blumer, 1979 cited in Athens, 2010; Guba, 1990; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) corroborated my decision to postpone the quantitative element of the project. It offered a framework of epistemological and ontological axioms that aligned to my own understanding of the interpretivist paradigm and my research journey. This framework recognises the multiplicity of human realities and the interaction of the researcher with the object of inquiry, taking a holistic approach in data collection and interpretation.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) discuss this idea in terms of context and how data needs to be understood within its own unique setting to be meaningful: "naturalistic ontology suggests that realities cannot be understood in isolation from their contexts" and any findings may only be valid within similar "contextual value structures" (1985, p. 39). The influence of the researcher throughout the process is inevitable given the use of 'self' as the primary research tool to gather phenomena, the tacit knowledge of the researcher and the interpretivist nature of qualitative data collection and analysis. Thus, rather than dismiss value-laden research as invalid, Lincoln and Guba advocate that it is unrealistic to think research can be conducted without the influence of researcher values, but instead should be embraced, exposed and its influence, analysed. It was at this point that I identified myself as a naturalist inquirer.

SI shifts the attention of the research from the frequency of responses or commonality of definitions to the subjective understandings of the individual and the impact on the way in which they interact with the social or 'natural' world. This individualistic interaction defines the naturalistic inquirer, the laterality of their approach to the collection and analysis of data, how it embraces, not just the literal dialogue but the context of that dialogue in non-verbal communication and researcher/organisation/participant relational factors.

In Blumer's (1979, cited in Athens, 2010) appraisal of Thomas' and Zaniecki's *'The polish peasant in Europe and America'*, he refers to his version of naturalistic inquiry as "the observation of happening in terms of its natural of actual character, as opposed to the observation of a surrogate or substitute form" (2010 : xxiv-v). He describes a phenomenological approach to social understanding rather than that advocated through empiricism. This idea is supported by other sociologists, such as Denzin (1971), Hoerder (1996) and Stanley (2010) all of whom highlight the logic of studying phenomena in the natural setting as a reliable account of individual experience, without the influence of imposing laboratory space, which impacts on honest reflections of the participants. From 1928 to 1980, Blumer devoted much of his time to the development of a methodological approach that would align with the symbolic interactionist researcher's epistemological lens (Athens, 2010, p. 89). He believed that to apply the interactionist concept, there would need to be a frame of reference that would guide the researcher through the naturalist way of studying a problem. Building on the unfinished work of Blumer (1928-1980), Athens (2010) discusses how the tenet for this framework drew attention to an inductionist methodology, the creation and evolvement of new ideas or constructions of reality.

So rather than starting with a model from which the findings are categorised through a deductive strategy, he proposes a third stage to the "exploration" and "inspection" model - "confirmation".

'Exploration' is defined by Athens (2010) as the initial examination of existing knowledge around the idea for study and then engaging in naturalistic primary data collection, such as interviews or focus groups. The 'inspection' stage involves the analysis of all data through a process of comparison; the primary data in contrast to the literary data, which when synthesised, new theory develops. Blumer (1979, cited in Athens 2010, p.95-97) promoted the concept of grounded theory, employing an open- minded or non-assumptive approach that respects the natural integrity of the topic but also the participants and their 'fit' within the socio-economic and organisational setting. Athen's 'confirmation' stage is described as the testing of results, by organising them into propositions (anything that can be proved or disproved) and exhausting all negative and positive attributions to be confident that the results are "grounded in reality" (2010, p.97).

My research experience was so closely aligned with this naturalistic paradigm, that I felt the decision to move from the mixed method approach could be justified. The model echoed the way in which I had undertaken the research, delving into literature to gain knowledge of the topic, interviewing participants in a holistic and reflexive way that combined what they said with their demeanour, collective understandings and cultural context. Then identifying and confirming themes that emerged, through a cycle of comparison and data integration. I realised the importance of the natural setting of police work and culture and the negative impact on responses in terms of

defensiveness, reservation or suspicion in disclosure. What I was most hopeful for was that the data gathered would be representative of the symbolic reality of the police, and not in my 'outsider's' perception of them.

## **Research Design and Methods**

The first step in designing the research was to formulate the question. According to White (2017, p.2) research is not to prove what you think you already know, but rather to reveal what you do not, a perspective closely aligned to my own beliefs. In his book, *Developing Research Questions*, White provides comprehensive guidance on how to transform a notion or a thought into a researchable question. He tells the reader that "being interested in a topic and having an interest in the results you produce are very different" (2017, p.1) and that any research question is better approached from an open-minded position to produce 'interesting theories'. He highlights that any new theory could have implications for social problems or policy and by linking research to a topical issue or current strategy, will likely generate outside interest.

The structuring of the question for this research project and approaching police areas 'in principle', certainly generated interest from the policing community. This was helpful in the planning of the project, as dates for meetings and a schedule for interviews needed to be set. Time management is as central to the successful completion of the research as collecting and analysing the data itself and is a 'personal thing' (Finch & Fafinski, 2016, p.126). Knowing how you work best is very important and for me, that entails having deadlines, being methodical and working in

a logical order. Setting dates and a schedule for the process of the project was crucial. Finch and Fafinski suggest diarising goals, time-quantifying tasks and embedding these into a timetable that can fit around normal life. What is essential in the planning of the project is that the timetable is manageable and doable.

The plan for this research project took the early form of a Gantt chart but soon developed into a more detailed and fluid document in Excel. This became a 'living spreadsheet', colour coded and categorised, that would change according to goals met (or not), obstacles encountered (or overcome) and procrastination. These aspects are what Finch and Fafinski (2016, p.128) talk about in terms of The PDP (Personal Development Planning) cycle. The six stages of this cycle (planning, action, recording, review, evaluation and using knowledge) explain the repetitive nature of development, identifying learning needs, evidencing your achievement towards that need, reviewing and evaluating your plan in light of this new knowledge and applying it to plan future actions. This resulted in notes added and information highlighted as links and relationships became known.

The university supported my personal development through access to skills workshops, modular work and supervision. Bell (2005, p.36) emphasises the importance of supervision and building a good relationship with your supervisor and supervision soon became an important element of my researcher journey as it enabled the opportunity to discuss, clarify and sometimes agonise over the research. Self-development included attending conferences, discussions with other academics and professionals in the field, and the process of reflection (Kolb, 2014). One of my

journeys through the cycle is apparent in the decision to change from a mixed-method to a simple qualitative study. Once experiencing and understanding the concept of saturation and discovering myself as a naturalistic inquirer, I was able to evaluate the value of the approach and make an informed decision on how to progress. Planning the research therefore, was not just about the allocation of times and dates to tasks and goal setting, but the development of self through which the study would grow and mature.

As previously discussed, researching the police can be complicated, due to subcultural factors and individual suspicion of the 'outsider'. This is also true for gaining permission from police areas, where there is a sometimes a cumbersome and bureaucratic process to be even considered for access. Crowther-Dowey and Fussey (2013, p. 27) review some of the difficulties in gaining access to the police and how finding the 'right gatekeeper' is important. The 'gatekeeper' would need to recognise the benefit to the police force and then be able to direct you to who could facilitate the recruitment of officers who would 'fit' the criteria for interview, in this research, frontline officers. With the stark increase in research applications from a growing population of criminal justice researchers, making a connection is not a guarantee of access. Emails can be ignored, deleted or forwarded to someone else and repeat the cycle. Crowther-Dowey and Fussey state, that only by convincing them, (the police), of the relevance of the research, with persistence and patience can obstacles to access, be overcome. Already at an advantage having been referred to the appropriate contacts by the area who had taken part in the pilot study, my strategy was to send a detailed appraisal of the research with the initial email and an invitation to meet, at their convenience, to discuss the research further. In those

meetings, some of which took a great deal of pursuance to arrange, I emphasised the benefit to the area, as contributing to a study that could potentially influence practice. I also reassured them that disclosure of any practice that was not within policy or considered sub-standard would be constructively and developmentally reported, rather than negatively.

Access to one particular police area was particularly problematic. The named contact placed obstacles such as security, vetting, information sharing, to name but a few, in the way to gaining access permission. After five months of regularly pursuing and providing additional information, I decided to withdraw from the area due to already restrictive time constraints but also recognising that there was an issue of trust. I wrote an email thanking the senior officer of that area for their support, but that I was no longer able to defer the participant sampling process. At the same time, I asked another participating area high-ranking officer, with whom I had had a long-standing professional relationship, to vouch for my authenticity and within 24 hours was granted permission. The matter of trust often relies on using relationships as a currency for negotiation (Denscombe, 2014, p.109), providing legitimacy to the status of the researcher and which, was clearly demonstrated to resolve this issue.

Gaining and maintaining trust with the organisation is of paramount importance as they can cease permission at any time. This was particularly important when the unforeseen need to apply for further recruitment was necessary, however, keeping regular contact and provision of updates supported the development of trust within these relationships. Whilst one area took a great deal of persistence and patience,



so the others were keen to participate and facilitate the recruitment of officers to participate.

The participants in this research, although not directly 'hand-picked' were accessed through a recruitment process which, in the interest of impartiality, entailed an internal member of staff nominated by the gatekeeper, to send out a pre-worded email via the police area intranet. This part of the research process used the non-probability technique of purposeful sampling (Denscombe, 2014; May, 2001), where only officers sharing the characteristics of being frontline police officers, who had attended at least one DV incident, were targeted. According to Denscombe (2014, p. 61), purposely focusing on a few participants, or 'instances', who 'fit' the required criteria bring relevance and knowledge to the research. This sampling method is pertinent to exploratory studies, like this one, where the participants needed to have the experience or expertise in policing DV incidents. May (2001, p. 95) echoes this sentiment suggesting smaller numbers of participants that are 'fit for purpose', in other words, they possess the required characteristic to produce useful and relevant information.

The email (Appendix 2) sent by the nominated person, invited officers to participate in the research and included the Participant Information Form and Consent Form to provide further information. The email requested potential participants to email me at my University of Portsmouth address, if they were interested in taking part. This resulted in a flurry of responses within the first 72 hours, to which I promptly responded and the logistics of where and when interviews took place, organised. I

offered a choice of venue, dates and times, so they could choose their Station, Head Office, or the university on a day and time that would fit in with shift patterns. This was to reassure them, their involvement would be confidential and anonymous and although some were happy to opt for their Station, others chose venues elsewhere. Nevertheless, some were still suspicious, with one asking, "no one can hear us, can they?" (AP004).

At this stage, I undertook an initial, 'deep' literature review, one that focused on EI in police decision-making, with the purpose of making links between theoretical knowledge and application. As I found no literature directly linked with the research focus, decision-making in other high-risk policing situations, such as those involving offenders or victims with mental health issues (Bradley, 2009) and the benefits of using emotions such as empathy and patience in their approach to them. In doing so, I hoped to reveal new knowledge, what I did not know, as I had in my pilot study, but this time with a much more specific focus; knowledge that I could use to inform the structure of the interview questions and the practical research stage.

The field research stage took almost 12 months and was a series of "high five" successful moments and anxious, frustrating obstacles from the process of ethical approval to the final interview completion. Indeed, the practical element of the project was an exciting albeit tense and often exhausting part of the research where the learning was intense, often surprising but ultimately rewarding. Ethical approval was the first obstacle and when successfully received required some minor amendments for the questionnaire element planned for the following year. This was due to the

Ethics Committee not being able to access the Bristol Online Survey draft I had completed at the time of approval but had not linked properly to the application form. A lesson learned! However, it seemed a sensible conclusion given the intention was to populate the multiple-choice responses with data from the interviews, which at that point was not available.

Interviewing was the preferred approach to gathering the qualitative data after reading Reiner's (1991) book, *Chief constables: bobbies, bosses or bureaucrats?* This inspired me to use interviews rather than the focus group method I had used in the pilot study, in which I had experienced negative relational and power dynamics (Hollander, 2004, p.603), the latter with particular focus on rank, gender and age. Although these dynamics are invalidated through what Hollander calls 'intelligent facilitation' and careful direction, the interview approach appeared a less challenging option, for me and the participant and played to a skill set I already had. It did raise other considerations however, around relationships and perceptions of me as a researcher but also mine of their role as police officers. Lincoln and Guba (1985) highlight the importance of the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee and as discussed earlier, trust plays an important factor in this. Rather than being a 'hostile' interviewer, where I was perceived as an enemy, 'outsider', I hoped for what Massarik (1981, cited in Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 269) termed as a 'depth interview', exploring the experiences and meanings with the participant, viewing one another as peers.

At the time of preparing for interviews, I was unaware of this as a preferred stance for the naturalist inquirer but my approach employed the same outlook; that I wanted

participants to understand that I was not there to judge or criticise their practice, but to understand and help improve practice. Reiner (1991) faced the same problem, with some of the participants of his research suspicious of his motives. His use of the semi-structured interview technique and support in issues of anonymity helped the participants' to express their views without fear of repercussion. This is one of many advantages to the interview approach. It has the potential for original insights, flexibility and freedom for expression (Finch and Fafinski, 2016, p.229) but also clarification of points and the opportunity to take a more holistic view of the participant in their role (Denscombe, 2014, p. 277).

The semi-structured interview allowed me to ensure the discussion focused on the three aims of the research but gave the flexibility for the participant to articulate their associated thoughts, opinions and experiences, as well as issues they believed as important that were not necessarily the focus of the researcher. This method provided the opportunity for creativity and new ideas to emerge whilst ensuring all elements of the objectives gain responses. The interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed ensuring an accurate recount of the discussion and the meanings they attributed to their responses. Technology, however, is not always reliable!

Following the obstacle of ethics and then access, the next was malfunctioning recording equipment, or perhaps user. The very first interview took place at a police headquarters. With my interview schedule, note pad and iPad in hand, the interview commenced. The pre-amble went well and both of us appeared calm and reasonably relaxed when I activated the recording 'app'. The interview went well, longer than I expected although I collected some useful insight. I thanked the participant and

walked to my car feeling quietly pleased and confident. However, as I eagerly switched on my computer to upload the voice recording my heart sank when I saw that only seven minutes had recorded. Seven, out of the 40 odd minutes the interview took. I was devastated. I checked and rechecked the device but it had clearly switched itself off. In a panic, I opened up a word document and recorded everything I could remember and had written in my notes.

A strategy for malfunctions in audio equipment should be considered before interviews commence (Bryman, 2008, p.452) – good advice in hindsight – but also in a situation where the participant refuses to be recorded. This can be for a number of reasons not least, the realisation that their words will be electronically preserved. The strategy advised by Bryman, is to carry on and adopted for subsequent interviews, which, with a change of recording device (and using two of them), was not repeated. Of course, there is always a financial cost incurred in research and transcribing recordings formed a significant portion of the overall cost of this project, however, they were invaluable in the process of analysis.

The interview schedule changed twice over the course of the interviews. The initial schedule design used 'open' and 'opinion' questions (Crowther-Dowey and Fussey, 2013, p. 106-107) to invite the participants to respond and elaborate on their interpretation of the issue. For example, question one asks, "What is your understanding of the concept, of EI?" or to explore how they feel about it, for example question 6a, "Have you ever had a strong feeling when attending a domestic violence incident?" The schedule comprised of eight main questions with

several prompting questions to encourage the participant into further elaboration if needed.

After the first interview I realised I needed to review the schedule questions, to fit better to the objectives of the project. I realised that the interview lacked structural coherence, the discussion jumping from one subject to another. In reviewing the schedule, I realigned it into sub-headings and changed some of the questions. This helped me ensure that the participant was providing responses to all three areas. It also helped the participant understand the format of the interview, with the preamble including a note of the structure. Some of the questions were also revised, for example, question 2a changed from “Do you feel you are emotionally intelligent?” to “Can you think of anyone who has these competences?” referring to the Goleman’s (1998b) model, which was provided for them to read. In doing so, I tried to elicit observations of good and poor EI practice as a template for them to evaluate their own competences. This seemed to work well, as officers felt able to refer to and critique, the behaviour of others, then use this as a guide for measuring their own skills and competences. The second review was small refinements to one or two questions resulting in the finished schedule. The resulting changes would inevitably have some impact on the direction of the interviews and subsequent responses but overall, I felt confident that this was a positive outcome.

At this point of change, I needed to consider how to proceed and the significance of that decision was deciding how many interviews would constitute "enough" to be representative of the police areas I was studying. As I was no longer going to implement the questionnaire, I needed to ensure I had collated enough data to

satisfy the needs of the study, through qualitative means. To explore this in more depth I referred to the National Centre for Research Methods and a review paper on 'How many qualitative interviews is enough?' (Baker & Edwards, 2012) for guidance. In a compilation of 14 'expert voices' (for example Norman Denzin, Alan Bryman, Daniel Miller and Howard S Becker) the paper offers their views in the clarification of what constitutes the 'right' number of qualitative interviews to represent the findings to a wider population.

There were varying perspectives. Patricia and Peter Adler of Colorado and Denver Universities respectively, talk about how the inductive nature of qualitative methodology often results in the researchers not knowing how participants they need at the beginning of a project. It is only when they begin to analyse the data, that they can decide whether they have enough or that further interviews are required to clarify emergent arguments. They conclude a mean average of 30 interviews is sufficient for a valid project but warn of the "publish or perish" critique of the research world. Les Back of Goldsmiths, University of London suggests it is not a matter of how many but the depth of which the interviewer has observed as well as listened to a participant, gaining vital knowledge beyond the rhetoric, a skill he believes has been lost with the recording of interviews and reliance merely on transcription.

The subjectivity of data saturation is also problematic in the question of "how many is enough?" Saturation is the process of continued sampling until no further information is gleaned (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) but as Bryman (2008, p.179) urges us to consider, and contrary to what we might expect, is that it is the absolute size of the sample that is important not its relativity to the population. What he is suggesting, is

that the smaller the size of the sample the less sampling error occurs and thus, the more valid the outcomes and potential for generalisations of populations of similar ilk. In other words, the findings from a sample of 100 prisoners from one prison in the UK could still be valid in application to another much larger maxi-prison, in the USA. The size ratio is immaterial if the information gathered has reached saturation point.

This concurs with Mason (2010), who states that qualitative studies are generally, much smaller in sample size than quantitative studies. Mason points out that it is impractical to use large amounts of qualitative data as the process of analysis takes longer and he suggests, only one piece of data is needed to provide meaning to a strand of the study. This is because the qualitative researcher is not interested in frequency but rather understanding the underlying meaning, thinking, attitudes or emotions associated with it. An in-depth analysis of a smaller sample will encourage less sampling error and a deeper understanding of the data collated and "is the way in which analytic, inductive, exploratory studies are *best* done" (Bryman, 2008, p.179).

There are of course, other reasons for the number of interviews undertaken for a project, such as lack of funding, time, interview skills (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 136). As Baker (2012, p.15) puts it, "there is no right place to stop your research, where you decide to stop will be somewhat arbitrary" rather than an analytical or prescribed process, but adds that you can build a conclusion on the evidence you do have, so long as you do not expand it beyond what you are able to justify. Mason (2010) also talks about the concept of saturation, a term used to describe the point at which continued collection of data is counter-productive. Where there is no new data,



only that which merely supports what has already been discovered, there is no added value or additional development in analysis, or as Strauss and Corbin (1998, p.136) put it: "when no new properties, dimensions, conditions, actions/interactions, or consequences are seen in the data".

Strauss and Corbin (1998) stress the importance of the researcher being disciplined in their analytical approach as, as with this project, the researcher can often be confronted with so much data that the decision to cease collection and tailor analysis is as important as ensuring a numeric representative sample. Indeed, Crouch and McKenzie (2006) propose that there is little or no evidence that a large size in qualitative interview research, provides more valid or reliable results. They in fact propose the contrary. That a smaller number of interviews are better for exploratory and inductive studies when they are building upon, critiquing or continuing the good work of previous scholars. This added clarity to my intention of the research, to build upon the model of EI as a tool for operational decision-making at the frontline of policing.

Mason (2010) concluded three possible scenarios for neglecting the concept of saturation. Firstly, he suggests that doctorate students do not understand saturation and so use comparatively larger samples of interviewees because they believe it will ensure defensibility of their findings. Secondly, they do understand it, but prefer a larger sample as justifiable "just to be on the safe side" (2010, p.10), or lastly, they use the sample size they committed to in their proposal regardless of their understanding of the saturation concept.

The answer to the question, "how many interviews is enough" appears as governed by a number of issues, but most predominantly, the idea of saturation. This is, however, unique to each study. The number of interviews does not have to be proportionately representative of a population in terms of numerical amounts, but enough to provide data that, even with further information, would not generate different results and, which satisfies the needs of the research question. As Mason (2010) states, only with a true understanding of the concept will the researcher be able to fully appreciate the limitations of their method and how taking that vital decision to stop data collection, will support the rigour of their study.

Another consideration was the potential impact changing to a single methodology might have on the final outcomes. I had originally adopted the qualitative dominant mixed-method model (Flick, 2007) proposing to use the statistical data gained through questionnaires to support or disclaim the qualitative findings. By not undertaking the quantitative element, the research could be open to the criticism of lacking triangulation as set out by Denzin (1978/2012). That, however, was based upon the assumption that the questionnaire response rate would be high enough for it to be considered reliable and completed with honest accounts (Denscombe, 2014, p. 232/233).

Questionnaires do offer an anonymity that interviews cannot and thus, arguably, may be answered more honestly as there is no motivation to please the interviewer. But it also relies upon individual motivation to complete it and a poor response rate could be more damaging in terms of validity. Nulty (2008) suggests the average completion rate as 33% though this is reliant upon many other factors such as the quality of the

questionnaire, motivation of the potential respondents and time availability. The latter is particular to the pressurized environment of policing and therefore, indicative of a lower response rate. Nevertheless, such a percentage response rate would still, potentially generate a significant number of respondents when across four areas and could be used to interrogate any theoretical ideas that evolved from the initial stage of the research.

Strang and Sherman (2012) discuss quantitative research in terms of experimental criminology and acknowledge that whilst it is not an appropriate method in the pursuit of evidence for all questions, it is a useful approach when working with operational agencies such as the police. They talk about RCT and how this type of experimental approach helps to gather comparative data from a random sample of a controlled group that can be used to test the value of a theory or effectiveness of a policy. As with other types of quantitative data collection, this can generate information that can be categorised into context-bound statistical summaries, summaries that demonstrate patterns of similarities or differences between the two groups that can be used to prove just such value or effectiveness.

It is these outcomes that May (2001) refers to as the defining characteristics of cause and effect. A quantitative methodology offers a scientific approach that considers reality objectively, rather than an individual phenomenon, and thus its most significant strength is its credible generalisation to the larger population. In doing so, social behaviour can be mapped and predicted with increased certainty and theoretical reliability that qualitative interpretivism, is highly criticised as lacking (Bryman, 2016; Crowther-Dowey and Fussey, 2017).

Quantitative research provides the opportunity to replicate research again and again, continually testing the theory or policy, beyond the original hypothesis, developing and potentially improving ideas and concepts that underpin practice. Through the quantification of behavioural observations, verbal responses and symbolic gestures positivists identify prevalence's, link variables and correlate trends to formulate mathematical answers to hypothetical questions (Crowther-Dowey and Fussey, 2017). The use of multiple choice questionnaires or fixed sets of questions generates pre-determined answers, which are specific to the hypothesis and thus retain a focus that does not require human expression or a prolonged process of collection or interpretation.

Perhaps the greatest strength of this approach is the ability to process vast amounts of data through sophisticated software packages such as SPSS, providing rapid results that can test and/or validate existing theories or hypotheses in evaluative research, that Crowther-Dowey and Fussey (2017, p.23) suggest is "where the effects of criminal justice or crime control interventions are measured". SPSS facilitates the instantaneous testing of independent and dependent variables that cannot be emulated in the same way with qualitative data through systems such as NVivo, which relies on the interpretation of the analyst to codify the meanings of text. This is very appealing to the larger criminal justice agency that wants to explore organisational attitudes or cultural views for example, such as Bullock and Millie's (2018) study of police officers perceptions of Special Constables and other voluntary personnel.

The omission of the quantitative element from this research is, thus, arguably significant to the credibility of the findings in terms of generalisations. The data sought for this study aimed to capture attitudes and opinions regarding the use of EI at DV incidents and how officers felt about its development. Whilst the data that was collected is both reliable and valid, critics of the interpretivist approach might suggest that it cannot be generalised to such a large population when the participant group was 27. This is clearly a significant limitation to the study.

In view of these findings, the decision to adopt the purely qualitative approach and aim for 30 interviews appeared rational and justifiable although the omission of the quantitative data would need to be considered when applying the results to the wider policing population. At this point, I had interviewed 18 officers. The recruitment of the additional participants took the same format as the initial recruitment stage. This was very successful, gaining more than enough to take the number of participants to 30. However, with time and date constraints, shift work and inevitable crises associated with police work, the final number was 27.

The second set of interviews, were organised in the same way and I hoped more relaxed, due to my making a decision on the direction of the study but also confidence in what I needed to gain from the interviews. However, as I had already started to analyse the transcription from the first set, I had begun to discover themes in the responses. This was the final obstacle in the field research stage and perhaps, the trickiest to overcome. It was apparent, that having prior knowledge of some of the data findings would make the interview process difficult. I would need to avoid leading questions (Crowther-Dowey & Fussey, 2013, p.108), that would steer the

participant into responding in a particular way, a way that would match what I had already learned in the preliminary analysis. This was important learning that I took forward when phrasing conversational questions in later interviews, to ensure their neutrality. Although I have to say that even as a seasoned interviewer, I found this difficult whilst maintaining the flow of the conversation.

Although I did not make it to the 30 interviews, after analysing the transcripts and field notes from the 27, I was confident that further interviews would add no further knowledge to the identified themes and no new themes would emerge. Instead, there was a replication of data, with no new insights obtained. These last interviews would need to be scrutinised for signs of any bias but ultimately there appeared no new learning.

## **Ethics**

Ethical compliance and its priority has gained importance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century due to the high value society place on issues, such as health and safety and data protection (Crowther-Dowey & Fussey, 2013, p.29). The consequence of growing risk-averse attitudes of universities, other organisations, funders and researchers in the 1990's resulted in the much tighter regulation of research activities than had been previously experienced (Westmarland, 2011). What then proceeded was what Westmarland calls the complex bureaucratic administration of complicated application forms, such as that completed for this research, that are required to identify possible 'risks' to the participants and any organisations involved in the research. Nevertheless, whilst the ethical approval process may seem arduous, it is necessary, not just to protect the participants and/or organisations from harm, psychological, physical or reputational,

but to protect the researcher and the integrity and quality of the research design.

Westmarland (2011, p. 145) usefully sums this up:

The ethical principles of integrity, honesty, confidentiality, voluntary participation, impartiality and the avoidance of personal risk to individuals or social groups characterise social science that is conducted in a professional and ethical manner.

The design of this research had these principles in mind. By virtue of the sensitivity of DV and the professional discretion used by police officers under scrutiny, it was important that any data remained anonymous, confidential and any disclosure handled considerately. To achieve this, access to electronically held information was pass-worded and any other data, such as field notes, kept in locked drawers.

Once the research idea is agreed, ethical approval is the next step in the project process. Addressing any ethical issues that may occur in the research "is both a moral and a formal university requirement" (Walker & Thomson, 2010, p.147) for all doctorate students and undertaken prior to any formal research commencing. This research complies with the University of Portsmouth ethical guidance that is in concordance with the RCUK Policy and guidance on the Governance of Good Research conduct ([Guidelines on Governance of Good Research Conduct](#)). It also complies with the British Society of Criminology Code of Ethics (<http://www.britsoccrim.org/docs/CodeofEthics.pdf>) gaining 'favourable approval' from the University of Portsmouth Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Ethics Committee in October 2016 (see Appendix 6). Once received, work began on recruiting participants.

Impartiality is important in the sampling and access process, to maintain objectivity in the recruitment of participants (Westmarland, 2011). The first area had already agreed to participate in the research, as they had been the subject of the pilot study, and were keen to continue. The next step was to identify other police areas that might want to become involved and this was achieved through 'word of mouth' linking in with other areas, through the introduction of the first area's gatekeeper and so on. This type of sampling is referred to as snowballing sampling (Bryman, 2008, p.184) which is best explained as a type of convenience sampling that is targeted, making contact with the initial participant and then establishing further contacts through them. Bryman notes impartiality issues in this form of sampling, particularly how the sampling process itself is in the control of others, who may lead the researcher to other samples due to friendships, or organisation or individual benefit of which they would not be aware and may be morally flawed. However, the difficulties of accessing the police areas prompted this style of sampling and given the nature of who the organisation contact were, was reliant on their honesty and virtuosity.

May (2001, p.60 - 61) identifies deontology (rule-based ethics) and consequentialism (the consequences of one's actions) as two approaches that guide the researcher in the moral conduct of their research and of which 'informed consent' forms an integral part. From a deontological approach, this is straightforward when working directly with the participants, as with interviews. Consent forms can be agreed and signed, but when it involves larger virtual numbers, accessed through the internet for example, May points out there is greater potential for moral or criminal deception, from both participant and researcher. For instance, a participant needs to be 18



years or over to give consent. Deception by the participant about their age could invalidate any data collected or indeed the research as a whole. On the other hand, the researcher may knowingly use this information and in doing so, violate their responsibility to the discipline (British Society of Criminology Code of Ethics, point 2, <http://www.britsoccrim.org/docs/CodeofEthics.pdf>).

The concern of impartiality in the sampling process is examined in more depth later in this chapter, when reviewing reflexivity in the research process and is linked with the idea of objectivity as central to valid and reliable outcomes. However, and as outlined further on, as an identified naturalist inquirer, subjectivity is embraced as a tool in interpretation and contextual 'truth' rather than an obstacle to objective understanding. As such, although impartiality is noted by Westmarland (2011, p. 145) as an ethical principle to be adhered to, taking a naturalistic approach has shown that although steps are taken to improve researcher objectivity, it can never be wholly eradicated and as such, acknowledgement and analysis of how researcher meanings have influenced the work, fulfils the moral boundaries of ethicality. This moral code, whilst epitomising the deontological rules of ethics, is also relative to the concept of consequentialism, which is concerned with the consequences to the researcher of such an act and, indeed, others associated with it; reputational risk to the commissioners, funders, co-researchers.

Prior to participating, officers were given a Participant Information Form (Appendix 2) which outlined the aims and objectives research and the implications for publication and other types of dissemination in the public domain (May, 2001, p.60). This was

important to maintain integrity of the project, being transparent about the focus and what it was I was trying to achieve. A Consent Form (Appendix 5) provided prior to the interview was also read, agreed and signed. This was the evidence required to demonstrate 'informed consent' (May, 2001, p.60) had been given by the officer. It constitutes an agreement between the participant and researcher to become part of the research and the use of any data they provide, in this research and any subsequent publication or public dissemination of it. The Consent Form also advises that disclosure of information pertaining to risk of harm to self or others, or intended criminal act, will result in their participation being terminated and the information shared with the research supervisor, in the first instance (May, 2001, p.61).

The psychological impact of DV is well documented, (Davies et al, 2007; Hoyle, 2007; Stanko, 1985) and there was no reason to underestimate the emotional impact it has on police officers, in their capacity as people as well as officers of the law. Psychological harm was, therefore, an identified personal risk. In terms of disclosure, whether as a victim or at a difficult incident, officers were reminded how they could access support networks within the service and external agencies such as the Samaritans or Women's Aid. For the two that did disclose, they already had support in place and assured me of their ability to contribute safely.

To maintain anonymity, I gave the participants the option of attending a mutual meeting place or a place of their choice, date and time. Each area provided central offices to facilitate interviews and some officers chose to meet there, others at their own stations and others at university premises. The times offered were from 07.00 to

21.00 to facilitate shift work. Providing the freedom to choose their time and location would support confidentiality and anonymity concerns and help build trust in the process. As Denscombe (2014, p. 222) points out, building a relationship of trust with the participant is just as important, albeit on different terms, as the organisation. Where the organisation may be concerned with reputational risk and the misuse of confidential data provided to the researcher, individual concerns centre on anonymity and the use of their responses in the research. To allay these concerns, a code number replaced the name of the participant, at time of transcription. This prevented the direct accreditation of any quotes used in the analysis and served to allay their concerns (Reiner, 1991). Indeed, building trust in this way, promoted participant motivation to engage with the interview process with an honesty and openness in disclosure that supports the ethnical integrity of the research.

### **Analysis of Data: A Thematic Approach**

Thematic analysis is widely understood as not having a traditional model of analytical techniques (Bryman, 2008, 2015; Denscombe, 2014; Finch & Fafinski, 2015; May 2001; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994) but as Boyatzis (1998) points out, to capture the richness of textual data, we need to take a pragmatic approach to the coding of it. The principles of thematic analysis, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) underpinned the approach used to analyse the data. As discussed, narrative data represents the experiences of the participants in their own words and 'reality'. The thematic analysis of qualitative data is therefore the identification of the unique patterns and themes found in the words and phrases the participants (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). These words describe their original experience within the

construction and context of their own world producing relative outcomes, as “what can be discovered by qualitative research are not sweeping generalizations but contextual findings” (1994, p. 20). However to capture the context of the responses, it is not just the articulations the researcher needs to take account of, but the whole of the participant’s interview. This includes the accompanying body language, environmental awareness and other seemingly abstract observations crucial to the concept of naturalism.

The data collected through was categorised into groups, derived from the data itself through the process identified by Glaser and Strauss (1967) as inductive reasoning. Inductive reasoning generates through the cyclical interrogation and re-interrogation of the data. The collection, coding and analysis of data is the underpinning process in generating new theory and is achieved by breaking into what Glaser and Strauss call ‘incidents’. These ‘incidents’ are then categorised and the cyclical interrogation process is repeated until all data supporting the category is exhausted, a cyclical process that can be likened to the idea of Blumer’s ‘inspection’ stage (Athens, 2010). The categories created from the participant’s discourse of their experience but also the areas the researcher identifies as significant to the focus of the project. These categories are refined through comparison, where two or more may merge and others, discarded. The result is the researcher developing salient themes that integrate into a model of conceptual explanation for the research question. An explanation that preserves the context of the participants’ world and framework through which they practice. Braun and Clarke (2006, p.16-23) outline their six-phase model, not as a linear process but one of a recursive functionality that is flexible and responsive to the researcher’s enquiry and findings:

**Phase One** – *familiarising yourself with the data*. This involved the reading and re-reading of the interview transcripts and recording the initial recurring ideas as noted by Ryan and Bernard (2003, p.89). Sometimes read in isolation, but often, to help with contextualisation, I would play the recording and read the transcript at the same time, immersing myself in all available data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.16; Clarke & Braun, 2013). This enabled me to visualise the interview and remember other abstract details prompted by notes or by memory. The first transcript was thoroughly interrogated, identifying all ideas regardless of apparent relevance and then each transcript thereafter interrogated for corresponding ideas or any new findings that were of interest and fitted within the focus of the study. With the use of open coding, which deconstructs the data from its original format into non-hierarchical codes, the data was organised into meaningful groups. It also involved the identification of any unexpected responses that suggested new ideas or perspectives, akin to grounded theory approach (Finch & Fafinski, 2016, p.398).

**Phase Three** – *searching for themes*. This phase sought to group together related codes, reinforce categories and reconstruct the data into a logical framework. This involved changing, merging and re-categorising the data to ensure it accurately reflected the coded content and the focus of the study. This reductionist approach formed the abstract framework for further analysis and highlighted the most predominant themes. This stage relates to the naturalist frame of reference discussed by Athens (2010, p.96) as the second part of the model, 'inspection', a process of constant comparison that highlighted "repeated patterns of meaning" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.15).

**Phase Four** – *reviewing themes*. At this point, the reconstructed categories were broken down further into subcategories providing a more in-depth understanding of the responses and their context. This more in-depth understanding of the qualitative data, captured attitudes, negative and divergent ideas, beliefs and behaviours which defined the meanings embedded in the rhetoric, what Boyatzis (1998) referred to in terms of 'richness'. Not just the participant's words but the meaning and context in which, they were spoken.

**Phase Five** – *defining and naming themes*. This phase involved the merging or discarding of categories through which I created a framework of themes to explore in a further cycle of interrogation. By drilling down into the data, I was able to explore any inter-relatedness of categories that could refine and clarify meanings and which assisted in the appropriate naming of the themes. This is what Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 22) described as "identifying the essence" of the theme. They stress the importance of keeping themes simple, not over-burdening them with complex identities but identifying what is interesting about them and why how this is relevant to your research question.

**Phase Six** – *producing the report*. Structuring the findings involved the summarising of categories into succinct and understandable themes, framed within the context of the participant's world and contain relevant and purposeful evidence. Essentially this phase formed the basis of the findings that considered the following points:

- The content of the group of codes within the summary (what the participant said).

- The coding patterns were relevant to the study (shared as well as unique experiences).
- The demographics of the participants and the correlation between these and the phenomenological data.
- The correspondence between themes and their relevance in addressing the aims of the research.
- How the identified themes 'fit' within current literature or complete the gap in understandings.

The themes identified and reported in this research are with these points in mind (see example in Appendix 5). They provide new meaning to the aims of the research and provide structured chapters of evidence enhance knowledge and understanding.

In addition to the original six, Braun and Clarke (2006) introduced a further two phases to the analysis process:

**Phase Seven** –. This process involves the cross tabulation of the different variables to explore similarities and differences that support the interpretation and application of the data. There were three separate sequences, one for initial categorisation of open codes and two for data reduction through consolidating codes into an abstract framework of themes, drilling-down for discrete data and clarity of interpretation. These prompted deeper thinking from which the final themes were defined (Bazeley, 2009, p. 9).

**Phase Eight** – the final phase that involves the synthesis of the memos to create a coherent and supported statement of findings that will contribute the final write-up.

There is often some further coding and probing, using the writing up itself to prompt a deeper understanding of what the data is saying

Whilst it is not the mathematical and quantifiable equivalent of the quantitative paradigm that argues consistency over time and space (an objective and replicable study), it can identify relationships between research and concepts which can be “orientated to the contextual uniqueness and significance of the aspect of the social world being studied” (Bryman, 2008, p. 378) the coding system. In searching for themes (codes), the researcher needs to be explicit in how they were established.

Initially, and before more in-depth matching of similarities are mapped and integrated, discrete points are extracted from the data, whilst random and isolated points are discarded. Transparency in the methodological approach can legitimise findings and using a framework through which they can be mapped assists in managing themes and data. Ryan and Bernard (2003, p.88) discuss how themes are established suggesting, “themes come both from the data (an inductive approach) and from the investigator’s priori theoretical understanding of the phenomenon under study (a prior approach)”. The inductive approach derives from the participant’s narrative and the priori, the researcher’s focus of enquiry. The analysis of the participant’s reconstruction of their experiences supports the researcher in developing new ideas and theoretical concepts to explain or illuminate the topic of study.

As part of the analytical process Ryan and Bernard (2003) recommend a series of thematic indicators are used. This method involves the analysts identification of



recurring ideas within the data such as *repetitions* of topics, *indigenous typologies or categories*, unfamiliar or local terminology or *similarities and differences*, interconnecting topics discussed in a different way. By adopting this method, the researcher can further interrogate the details of codes and categories so to integrate them into an understandable explanatory model (2003, p.94).

Blumer's (1979 cited in Athens, 2010) model with the additional 'confirmation' third stage as suggested by Athens, provides the structure for just such an understandable explanatory model; organising the findings into relevant propositions, themes, that can be tested against each set of data (participant transcripts) through the process of comparison (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2013). These develop into a "grounded theory" of the topic. For example, in this research, a theme has evolved around the issue of time constraint caused by austerity and lack of resources. Evidence for this proposition is in comparable quotes from participants, such as "...you might give them more time. To be honest, on response, you're so pressurised, they're always shouting at you for the next job, the next job..." (AP003) or "...there's no time to be empathic or build a rapport, so disclosure doesn't happen. Why would they?" (TP011). Whilst these do not explicitly state the same thing, they are both concerned with the same issue of time constraint.

## Using NVivo

To assist in the analysis of narrative data, there are software systems to support the researcher. One such system is NVivo, which is a qualitative data analysis computer software package designed to support researchers in the analysis of rich-text based data. The benefit of using a software system such as NVivo is primarily of time efficiency, especially where the quantity and length of transcriptions to analyse present as time-consuming (Bryman, 2008). NVivo is not a system that replaces the hermeneutic task of the researcher but rather facilitates the capturing of the data in the analytical journey, whilst additionally serving as a tool of rigour and transparency (Welsh, 2002), one that promotes reliable and valid outcomes.

Following training provided by the University of Portsmouth in the advanced use of NVivo, I attempted to upload my transcripts and begin the task of coding (nodes), building what Bryman (2008, p. 570) explains as tree nodes, linking interconnected themes and data. The purpose of NVivo is to link the data with the node to support the researcher in easily locating evidence and interrelated data. Unfortunately, and although not a “technophobe” I struggled to grasp the technicalities of NVivo and spent more time emailing or telephoning the support network, than I did actually completing any analysis. I got to the point where I felt I had wasted weeks of my time and had not accomplished very much. Frustrated and tired, I looked at alternative systems. In previous research analysis, I had used Microsoft Excel, a software system I was very familiar with due to my role in financial planning and one that I felt comfortable and confident using. Excel is often overlooked as an option for qualitative analysis (Meyer & Avery, 2009), often perceived as a number crunching

package used in the financial market place rather than a tool that can effectively manage, present and analyse large volumes of data in a variety of formats. Meyer and Avery point out, that not all research or researchers are the same and therefore what works for one, may not work for another. Excel offered an alternative opportunity to utilise a software system to support my research analysis in the form of identifiable codes and understandable layout.

There are critics of Excel, although these appear to centre around the way it is used rather than the software *per se* (Garrett, 2015). Garrett reports that experienced Excel users have comparative error rates with those with little or no experience and that, even professional researchers exhibit similar errors, which they attribute to the lack of clarity or comprehensive literature to teach or support users. Nevertheless, Excel has a variety of functions that are useful for thematic analysis, including single and multiple value coding, logical formula coding with functions such as IF/THEN, LOOKUP that can be used within the text, data sorting and counting all of which I am familiar and competent in using. The spreadsheet has many layers that can be linked to each other or populate graphs for visual use. In a matter of days, I had made more progress in assembling data, than I had made in the weeks I had spent trying to use NVivo. For this reason, I continued using this method to organise my analysis.

## **Limitations**

As with all research, there have been limitations to this project. In selecting the methodological approach to research, Crowther-Dowey and Fussey (2013) point out the need to understand the advantages and disadvantages of each and appreciate

the potential limitations in the final design. Coding, generalisation, consistency in approach are all identified as factors that can impact links made to the aims and objectives of the research and expose the findings to possible critique.

“Methodological rigour” (2013, p, 44) is therefore important throughout the design process and conduct. This research is no exception to such scrutiny and its limitations, explored here.

My lack of technical skills to operate NVivo and the use of Excel as the alternative, are already covered. This could be considered a limitation in terms of the data not being analysed through contemporary analytic software but as Garrett (2015) pointed out, Excel is a good software package, it is *how* it is used that impacts’ on the quality of outputs. Having used it in a variety of roles in the past, I not only felt competent as a user but confident with the results. It facilitated the categorisation and coding of the responses and the tabulation of quotations into themes in similar vein to the NVivo system.

Money was a limiting factor, particularly because of the time it took to earn it. Time was probably the greatest personal limitation; working full time, changing jobs and having to take weekend work to pay for the course left little or no time to study or at least, devote the time to it that I would have liked. Moreover, the time to become a “serial writer” (Murray, 2011, p. 179) and the skills needed to be able to write an instalment and return to it days, sometimes weeks later and continue the journey, proved difficult at best. Murray offers some good advice on planning, structuring and scaffolding your writing and ideas on how you can maximise the time you do have to produce high quality volume text. One activity I engaged in was writing retreats

organised through work and in which I was able to focus and enjoy the writing process again. Enjoyment was a key component in high quality/high volume output for me and the retreats helped me to feel re-enthused about my research, when often it felt more of a burden. Nevertheless, the limitation of time cannot be underestimated.

Other, academic limitations are those that form the critique of the qualitative paradigm. Bryman (2016, p.398-400) describes them as, the inability to replicate the research methods exactly, resulting in any future research unable to form a direct comparison. Qualitative research, as with all research, falls within a backdrop of external and individual context, participants move on, the organisation infrastructure changes or policies reconfigured to meet new political or policing priorities. In an ever-changing political and policing environment, this inevitably means that an evaluation of the impact any implemented recommendations might have, would be difficult to measure. Unlike quantitative data however, qualitative captures the ideas and opinions of the participants and values the uniqueness of the individual. Thus, any future research would acknowledge that replication in research is not an exact science.

The ontological positioning of the researcher is also a limitation for replication and although this is not necessarily associated with specific methodologies (Crowther-Dowey & Fussey, 2013, p.43), tacit knowledge, life experience, motivation and socio-economic context of the researcher is unique in every case. I have identified as a naturalistic inquirer (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and thus taken a holistic approach to the

design, delivery and analysis of the research. In order for a comparable replication, a future researcher would need to adopt a similar methodology and constructivist view of criminological application. As no two persons' experiences are the same, the subjectivity, especially of the naturalistic inquirer, may pose further restrictions.

I have fully acknowledged and critically discussed the potential criticism around the number of participants used in this research, recognising that this element is susceptible to scrutiny, particularly in terms of their representation of the wider, policing community. However, the discussion clearly set out the justification for and validity of the sample size. The sampling method is probably the more challenging and challengeable part of research design (Crowther-Dowey & Fussey, 2013; Denscombe, 2014; May, 2001). That only four of the 43 forces nationally were part of the research could raise questions of outcome validity. However, as previously noted by Bryman (2008) and the contributors in Baker and Edwards (2012), the size of the participant group does mean that generalisations have less credence.

The change of methodology may also be considered a limitation. The omission of statistical evidence originally planned to support the final qualitative outcomes could be argued as a constraint to their objectivity, thus validity (May, 2001). The decision to move from the holistic approach of mixed methods (Johnson et al, 2015) was difficult and only through a period of literary reflection did I feel confident that mixed methods was not the only or indeed the most appropriate method. As Bryman (2009) and Niehaus (2009) for example, point out, the method used should not only align to

the theoretical approach but also the skills of the researcher in conducting that method.

Interviewing is a skill I acquired through my career and in which I feel competent and able to interpret reflexively. The process of thematic analysis undertaken for this research (Braun and Clarke, 2006) provided the opportunity for reflexivity in the analysis of the data; being able to read, listen, reimagine the interviews over and over facilitated contextualisation, saturation and reflexivity. So whilst it is impossible to predict what any quantitative data may have shown, the qualitative data analysis indicates a trend of responses that if collated via questionnaires, would have feasibly been similar.

Despite these limitations, therefore, the research design was transparent and delivered with integrity, promoting an objective and honest account of the data and the production of evidential and reflexive outcomes. Of course, objectivity is subjective to the criminological approach of the writer. Letherby, Scott and Williams (2013) when writing about objectivity and the notion of public sociology suggest non-reflexivity of the researcher is not necessarily as important as engagement of the public. Indeed, convict criminology is based upon, the 'lived experience' of the researcher and what this can bring to both the public and academic arena (Earle, 2018). Whilst I did not draw from 'lived experience' in the same context, the insight into policing, albeit as an *outsider* (Reiner, 2000) and the criminal justice sector was useful in pursuance of the aim of the research and certainly the engagement of the participants.

Limitations to research are, thus, inevitable. However, how limiting a factor is, depends upon the way in which, it is applied to the research, and embraced by the researcher. Acknowledgement, reflection and consistency all support the reliability of the process and ultimately, the integrity of the results.

## **Writing it up**

At the time of writing this chapter, deciding on what to write was a problem in itself. Having read so much, determining what was relevant and what was not became part of the procrastination cycle, alongside other activities such as tidying up or doing the ironing! I have encountered many highs and lows of the social researcher's journey nevertheless, I have seemingly become what Murray (2011, p.179) describes as a 'serial writer', someone who produces a thesis in a series of instalments, chapters, that interconnect. The 'serial writer' concept provides a continuity in how the writing-up is organised, not just in the production of the thesis but in the behavioural process of writing within the research journey. As Murray (2011) and others have noted (Bryman, 2008; Guccione & Wellington, 2017; Owler, 2010), the emotional and time-consuming demand of thesis writing, can be supported through a system of regular writing (15 minutes' writing equating to approximately 200 words), which is "an important professional skill" (Murray, 2011, p. 80). Something we have to build into our other professional and indeed, personal lives. Scaffolding arguments, structuring paragraphs and linking words, concepts and chapters is a crucial skill if the thesis is to meet required standards and writing how this has been achieved thus forming part of the methodology.



Developing the habit of 'writing something every day' was something I decided on early on in the doctorate journey, not least because having a full-time job and a second job to pay for my study already intruded into the little personal/family life I had. To begin the writing process early not only allowed me to feel I was making progress but drafts of text slotted into chaptered folders, reflections and field notes and tables of analysis that culminated into the basis of the written article. This steady flow of written words, headings, structures and reflections, discussions with colleagues, friends and supervisors have kept the research alive whilst I have gone about my daily business. For me, this was the beginning of my transformation of student to author, that rather than putting the data I had collated, together in a prescribed format that lacked, that I was "constructing a conceptual argument – a thesis – that is well reasoned, well warranted and well-articulated" (Piantanida & Garman, 2010, p. 245).

As Bryman (2008, p662) and Guccione and Wellington (2017, p.98) point out, the writing process can often take a 'back-seat' to other tasks and so starting the process early until it becomes a habitual behaviour results in a convincing and justified portrayal of your research. This was by no means an easy task. How and when you should reserve time from work and family commitments on a daily or just regular basis can be guilt-ridden, logistically demanding and completely demotivating if your planned session is disrupted or unproductive. 'Shut up and write' retreats organised at work were the latter experience for me, as were talking to colleagues who appeared so much more knowledgeable and scholarly. This was often disheartening as those around me seemed so engrossed in their projects whilst I

procrastinated over themes, sub-headings, chapter headings and more importantly, the words in which to populate them.

At this point, I acknowledged that I would work more effectively on my own; without the distraction of others apparent achievements and ability to perform uncomplicatedly. Whilst still accessing the support of my supervisor and cohort peers remotely, by which I mean via Skype and social media, I was able to organise my professional commitments, explain my position to colleagues, family and friends, and create 'space' (emotional, intellectual and actual) in which to conduct and put together my research. This supported my solitary writing strategy that I had embedded into my researcher 'profile', in what Smith and Wincup (2000, p. 345) aptly named a "messy business".

### **The reflective and reflexive Journey**

Reflexivity is considered an important component of research design (Darawsheh, 2014; Davies & Francis, 2011; Finlay, 2002; Vasquez-Tokos, 2017) and in qualitative research there has been a growing expectation, that researchers employ methods and strategies to ensure the rigour and quality of their studies. Having a conscious level of reflection on their own understandings, meanings, assumptions, thoughts and actions, employing reflexivity enables the researcher, to rationalise decisions and interpretations within the research process. In doing so, they are able to some of the 'messy business' associated with the reliability and validity of their findings (Vasquez-Tokos, 2017, p.562).

In Finlay's (2002, p.212) paper, *Negotiating the Swamp: The Opportunity and Challenge of Reflexivity in Research Practice*, she talks of the practice of reflexivity as the central tenet of qualitative research, and of introspective reflexivity as self-insight, the ability to self-examine your own perceptions and understandings and how, these shape your life in actions and interactions with others. Finlay refers to the work of Moustakas (1994) who describes introspective reflexivity as the researcher's reflection on life experience, intuition, tacit knowledge and thinking as a framework through which to discover an area of interest and thus develop the focus of the project.

Moustakas (p.21) discusses the common qualities of ethnography, hermeneutics, grounded theory, phenomenological and heuristic research as qualitative methodologies that consider the holistic nature of the experience rather than a two-dimensional description and sets out seven steps to conducting social research. These steps, or procedures, provide the researcher with a framework through which to approach their topic that will embrace the wholeness of the participant's experience, by placing value on, and meanings to, the data whilst positing the experience within the context of its occurrence. He suggests that by preparing and reviewing the method of data collection, formulating questions and conducting face-to-face interviews, the researcher will discover the essence or 'final truth' of the phenomena.

It is in search of this 'truth' that Finlay (2002, p. 21) explains is no longer paralysed by the researcher trying to eliminate their existence in the conduct of the research,

but rather embrace the subjectivity they bring as an opportunity to collate and analyse data from a specific, professional perspective or interpretation. In doing so, the “researchers no longer question the need for reflexivity: the question is how to do it” and thus negotiating the muddy water of self-analysis and disclosure can begin to feel increasingly uncomfortable.

When deciding the best route to undertake this research, I realised I needed to locate my role as researcher, not just within the organisation central to the project, but as a former practitioner in the criminal justice sector. Prior experience of working alongside the police and observing their decision-making, would inevitably have a significant influence on my chosen topic (public protection was at the heart of my probation role and decision-making, of passionate interest) but also, it would invariably influence the construction of my project and my interaction with the participants. Negotiating the 'reflexive swamp' was, therefore, complex although perhaps less uncomfortable for me, as part of the process of becoming a qualified probation officer is to deconstruct your views, opinions and personal meanings and scrutinise them from an objective and anti-discriminatory viewpoint. This process of self-analysis was a painful and often soul-searching exercise that required honest and sometimes, difficult admissions alongside feelings of deskilling and incompetence. Nevertheless, in undertaking this process, I was able to identify with the journey Finlay (2002) refers to, with confidence and an understanding of the difficulties I was going to face. Moreover, I was able to recognise the value of reflexivity as a 'critical' tool.

The murky waters of the reflexive swamp also have to consider the role of the participant, as it has become increasingly acknowledged that it is not only the researcher than can bring value-judgements and subjectivity to the process (Vasquez-Tokos, 2017, p. 467). Participants also bring their interpretations and subsequent expectations of the researcher's role and position in the research and this in turn impacts on, their interactions with the researcher. Hollander (2013) explains this as the participants holding the researcher 'accountable' for their behaviour. The researcher should 'live up' to the perceived expectations of the participants by behaving in ways that are synonymous to the symbolic meanings they attach to characteristics such as age, gender, sexuality and, in this research, of not being a police officer; an 'outsider' (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). By not behaving in the expected way, the interaction between the interviewer and interviewee might change; different interaction would result in the interview conversation and prompting questions changing, thus drawing different responses and changing the resulting data.

It was important, therefore, that to build rapport and trust with the participants, I acknowledged my position as an 'outsider', asked questions to explore and understand the participant's experience of being an officer as part of the 'in-group' and consider their responses as both individuals and as part of that group identity. Much of this part of the conversation occurred prior to the interview and reflected in my field notes, although there was also a significant amount of this contextual information gleaned throughout the recorded interview. This was a reciprocal process where, when prompted or when thought as beneficial to gain a greater rapport and thus a deeper understanding of the participant's 'meaning', I disclosed

parts of my previous research/practice/experience, whilst being careful not to 'lead' (Crowther-Dowey & Fussey, 2013, p.151; Davies, 2001, p.91); the 'interviewer effect'. As a skilled interviewer, trained in the empowerment of others, this technique of reciprocal disclosure as outlined by Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen and Liamputtong (2007, p. 332-334) enables the researcher to validate the participants story and help them feel their contribution is valuable.

Undertaking this research at this time was not for professional interest, or as a doctorate student, but in the position of an 'outsider' to the police force, whose own experience and reflexive insight might bring value to the outcomes. The design of the research, from forming the research question, collating the data and the interpretation of the responses, to the identification of themes and writing-up have all been influenced by the concept of reflexivity. It not only allowed me to utilise my operational knowledge and experience in constructing the project, but also in the securing of the organisations as participants and the officers' engagement in the interview process. What I subsequently found was exciting new themes and ideas, presented thematically in the following four chapters.

## **Chapter 3: “Gut Instinct and Spidey Sense”**

Undertaking the thematic review was the most interesting part of the research; discovering ideas and attitudes that could not have been anticipated prior to the study and which have exposed new perspectives and dimensions to the way in which EI and policing can be understood. The initial analysis of the transcriptions produced countless ideas, which were narrowed-down into the four key themes discussed in this chapter. These have been broken down into the most prevalent of those ideas and which comprise each of the four key themes. The findings from each highlight specific areas raised by the participants, pertinent to the overall aim of the research, their understanding of EI and how or if it is employed in their decision-making process at DV incidents. This chapter starts with a summary of the demographical data of the participants.

### **The Demographics**

The final 27 participants were a mix of gender, age and experience, the majority coming from area D and A. Area D also had the largest disparity in gender ratio. The other areas were equal or almost equal. Area C differed quite significantly to the others in time served with the force, almost four years below the overall mean average (see table 1. below);

**Table 1. Participant Demographics**

<b>Police Area/ID prefix</b>	<b>No. of Participants</b>	<b>Male/Female</b>	<b>Mean Average Age - years</b>	<b>Mean Average Length of Service - years</b>
A (IP)	8	4:4	37	12
B (NP)	4	2:2	45	10
C (AP)	5	3:2	34	6
D (TP)	10	8:2	42	11
<b>Total 4</b>	<b>Total 27</b>	<b>Total 17 Male – 10 Female</b>	<b>Overall Mean Average 39.5 years</b>	<b>Overall Mean Average Length of Service 9.75 years</b>

However, overall they were also the youngest group, which may account for this disparity. Nevertheless, 53% of the national force are aged between 26 and 40 years (Hargreaves, Husband & Linehan, 2018, p.36), thus along with Area A, Area C falls within the national average whilst Area B and D are slightly above.

Of the 27 participants, 17 or 63% were male which is comparable to the overall police officer population for England and Wales, where the male/female ratio is 70:30 (Hargreaves et al, 2018, p.33). In terms of rank, the majority were Police Constables however there were also seven ranked officers (RO) of Sergeant and above, five of whom were male, 18.5% overall and approximately 30% of all the male participants. In the force nationally, men occupy approximately 75% of RO's (2018, p. 34). The ranked sample for this research is therefore slightly higher in comparison, as females accounted for 43% of all ROs.

The RO characteristic was particularly interesting in relation to the idea of rank orientated subcultures within police culture (Loftus, 2012), where some responses



clearly supported the idea of different values and attitudes at middle management than at lower level. For example, when discussing the possibility of EI training, a RO from Area D, although advocating EI training as a positive thing, took a more strategic view in terms of workload:

...having the time to go and do training packages, and things like that, because obviously the...predominantly if there is training that's put on board for all staff it's generally run from [name of training facilities]. So, it's a day out of your schedule, and non-duty days to people, particularly in DV, are like gold dust where you literally think, good God, thank God we're not duty that day. So, I can do this, this, this, this, and then you get an email come through that says you're on training, as I had yesterday for a tutor coaching course, or something. I'm like, oh God, that's on an early that I...that...and you literally...you really are sort of like fighting your diary with when you can fit things in to do things (TP003).

They were also reluctant to mix officers from other departments in any training. For example, IRT (Instant Response Team) officers and PPU (Public Protection Unit) officers, suggesting “they wouldn't...they don't really, they don't mix [...] they have their set responsibilities and duties. We have our set responsibilities and duties. So, everything is very separate” (TP003), creating a sense of ‘them and us’ akin to the idea of the ‘in-group’ perspective described by Loftus (2012), in protection of their own department.

An IRT PC from the same area however, embraced the idea of joint training. They suggested that “...it might help develop, you know, help others understand more about what those victims need and how we can do better, learn from each other...” (TP014). This perspective offers a more positive attitude towards training and joint development, acknowledging skills and knowledge from both groups of officers

rather than realising it as an obstacle. When asked how this might fit with their working schedule, they were happy to undertake it as an additional task:

when its important training, I mean it would help working with this type of offence wouldn't it?.it would have to be on an off duty day...but if it helps then we should do it (TP014).

It was unclear why the RO had made this rather territorial remark, as it was not pursued further in interview due to time constraints and topic focus. However, this type of ranked, subcultural difference was found throughout the analysis of responses, although it is important to note, that this was not apparent with all RO participants. It is acknowledged that RO participants will consider issues at a more strategic or departmental level, however, how it impacted on their attitude towards different aspects of the research, such as training, and despite their acknowledgement of possible benefits, was not foreseen. These type of responses are highlighted within the themes, alongside any rhetoric or behavioural nuances thought pertinent to the context of the responses (shown in brackets after the quotation) the first of which surrounds the participant's understanding of EI.

### **“Gut Instinct and Spidey Sense” - Understanding**

In conducting this research, it has become apparent that the concept of EI is not readily understood or knowable to the general population. When speaking to academic colleagues or friends and family some were very mindful of the EI concept and had good awareness of their own EI, others were vague. The interviewed participants were no different. Some were very enthusiastic when asked about their knowledge of EI, eager to explain their understanding and demonstrate their

emotional dexterity. Others looked blank and a little embarrassed that they had neither heard of the concept and/or knew nothing of what it entailed. So when asked the first question, “What is your understanding, of the concept, emotional intelligence?” there were a variety of responses, the extremes of which are apparent in table 2:

**Table 2. Sample of Participant Responses to Question One.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Participant</b>
“To be honest, I don’t know”.	AP003
“Sorry, I’ve got no idea” (laughs a little embarrassed)	IP002
“No, I don’t know, I just don’t know”.	AP005
“I’ve not heard the term before I have to confess”.	NP003
“Emotional intelligence is a, I’m trying to think how I understand it, there’s lots of different theories on intelligence, and the traditional IQ was only one of them. I don’t know who the research is or names, but, as I understand it, there’s various other intelligences, which have been theorised and seems to fit in better, understanding how people work. Emotional intelligence, as I see it, is a person’s ability to understand and manage their own intelligence and read and understand other people’s intelligence, and communicate and work within those effectively, and how skilful they are at doing that”	IP009
“I think you can sum it up in one word. Empathy”.	IP008
“I suppose it would be managing your emotions, depending on what situation you’re in. So perhaps if I went to an incident, it was quite traumatic, however, I would have to sort of manage my own emotions in order to assist the people who are sort of experiencing that or who are victims of that, and being able to act professionally, despite what I felt personally”.	TP002

Although there were others who were not able to articulate an understanding of EI IP002, a male RO, appeared quite embarrassed when he could not explain. Embarrassment could be attributed to a number of factors, such as rank (self-expectation as an RO), masculinity (given the researcher was female) or self-esteem but it was not present in others of lower rank. The latter two responses show insight into EI, recognising it as a self-management tool and the benefits to their role. TP002 raises the concept of victim communication and acknowledges the impact of trauma on their emotions and the emotions of the officer themselves. This is something raised by other participants, in their understanding of EI:

Well I mean I would imagine that it would be the words of the victim really and how they come across and how their emotional views of the situation that they're in have an impact on the decisions that you make (TP003).

In this example, the participant acknowledges how the impact of victim emotions can influence decision-making. However, their analogy "words of the victim" to EI is tenuous, as many participants expressed how the rhetoric of the victim is often completely different to the reality of their situation, particularly at time of crisis. IP007 suggests that the victim's words are often contrary to what their body language indicates for example:

... on the face of it, it looks like what they tell you but there'll be little things that you'll think, that doesn't really sit right with what they've told me, or you can see people's expressions. I'm very visual so I watch people and I think a lot of the times people give away body language. So I think, okay, you've told me that but your body language is saying something else, so something else has happened (IP007).

Indeed, IP007 likens EI to the idea of a "seventh" sensory perception they explained as the ability to feel and understand the whole environment. When first asked what they thought EI is, their response was "I haven't got a clue, really" yet, with further

exploration using the Goleman (1998b) framework (see Figure 2 page 51) they explained EI in a perceptive way:

It's like a seventh sense you get, like a spidey sense. Like, if you go somewhere and you think, I've got to be really aware because that just doesn't feel right, or you see the way people are reacting and you think, she's not behaving how you think she should react, maybe she's trying to hide something, she's not telling me the truth about what's going on. It's just a sense that you get, I think (animated hands and looking around the room whilst speaking) (IP007).

“Spidey sense” relates to the character of Spiderman, part of the Marvel Studio’s franchise and his extrasensory perception. It is this that IP007 was relating the concept of EI to – to know or sense things without actually having to use the five senses, a supernormal awareness of the whole situation, the emotions of others and how these related to the physical environment. Later in the conversation they related it to recent terminology used within the police, “It's called professional curiosity, it's thinking outside the box, just thinking, is there anything else there?” (IP007).

What does not appear to be considered here is the way in which the victim maybe handling her situation. As Hoyle (2007) pointed out, they are often the best judge of their own safety and whilst IP007 may be accurate in his perception of what is “truth”, it may not be the right time to act upon it. Thus, whilst it is important to see how officers are using EI to identify rhetoric/behavioural dichotomy and pursue a more interrogative response, positive action according to the national strategy (College of Policing, 2015) contrarily does not necessarily mean arrest and detention from the scene (Rowe, 2007, p.292). Rather, “spidey sense” will guide the officer into taking positive action away from the context of the incident, as something that can be followed-up in an environment outside of the scene.

Another participant also likened EI to “spidey-sense”. When discussing their understanding of EI, AP006 said,

I've just thought, [it's] like almost like a spider-sense" explaining further, “for me, it's generally just speaking to people, and seeing how I feel from what they're saying, and how they're reacting, what their body language is, things like that. That's generally what I look at”.

Again, the officer appeared to identify the difference in the victim's body language from their account of the incident, recognising how the mismatch of information could have alternative meaning. This mismatch, an often subtlety in symbolic communications, is synonymous with DV victim behaviour (Craven, 2008) and likely more apparent to officers who are more experienced in dealing with DV incidents. According to Hoyle (2007), it is exploring the “why” of the disparity that is important to the decision the officers make. The rationale for the victims mixed symbolic messages as judges of their own safety.

The idea of EI as a “spidey” or seventh sense (or more formally as professional curiosity), was also referred to as gut instinct by many of the participants. They explained this as intuition, a feeling, a sense of knowing something without actually knowing why they know it, a tacit knowledge similar to that described by Eraut (1994) in his idea of ‘practical wisdom’ - and it motivating them to approach situations differently. Indeed, when interpreting EI as a gut instinct, some officers associated emotions with it that directly linked with their assessment of risk; “... but I do look at stuff and I do, kind of, look and I think you are driven by your gut as well, because if you think, shit, this is dangerous, you get that butterfly scenario” (NP001). In this example NP001, indicates how they are motivated by their gut instinct, or EI, and

that it has a physiological as well as cognitive symptom. The feeling of fluttering or “butterflies”.

Others reiterate this relationship to butterflies as the physiological symptom of EI. For example, IP012 noted that “it’s a physical thing, you know, physical feeling that you sort of get, where, like a fluttering, nervous feeling. Butterflies in your tummy” (laughs) or “it’s like a feeling in your stomach, you know, a gut feeling, you know there’s more to it” (rubs their stomach) (TP002). What was clear from the participants is that they did not fully understand why they feel it.

Yes, because, well, it’s a case of reading....not even necessarily realising you’re doing it, you’re picking up on that body language as well, or the, sorry, non-verbal communication as they call it these days but all those things are there and you read that some people are attuned to it other people aren’t because they’re more focused on what’s been said to them (NP003).

In this respect, the participant suggests that the symptoms of EI, this cognitive instinct or intuition alongside the physical symptom of butterflies in the stomach, influence the way in which they deal with a DV incident. For example, with “maybe cautiousness or suspicion” (TP002). They question what appears to be the situation because tacit meanings associated with victim/offender emotion, rhetoric and body language, urges them to challenge what is at first observable. IP005 also talks about these tacit meanings as an emotional symptom of gut instinct, but not just emotions experienced by themselves, but by other actors around them. Talking about a particular offender at an incident they stated, “I think it’s the reception from the suspect a lot of the time as well... as soon as you go in, if they’re hostile, very anti-police, you sort of have a feeling something’s not right here” (IP005). These

symptoms thus appear to guide the participants into their line of enquiry and the process of risk assessment.

## **Application**

In interview, NP003 described how using EI supports the completion of risk assessment tools such as the DASH. They explained the DASH as a difficult and blunt tool to use, particularly if you do not understand the meaning behind the questions on it. They described how using EI helps to undertake the DASH, framing the questions in a way that firstly aids the victim's understanding but also, effects disclosure, especially when your instinct is telling you there is more to the situation than what you can see or are being told;

so if the person asking the question doesn't understand the questions then the person that you're talking to is not going to either and you're not going to be able to explain what you need and again a lot of questions on the dash you can answer from your general conversation with people and I don't think it's right to just sit there and just plough through these questions and, I mean, it doesn't mean you have to read them verbatim, you know, to style [frame] the question to the person that you're talking to. Like we change our mode of communication depending on who we're talking to (NP003).

NP003 was able to identify how communication is different for different people and how by "styling the question differently", they could gain a better rapport, ergo a better response. This is at a time of heightened emotions of those involved in the DV incident but sometimes the attending officers when having to attend an incident. When asked what types of emotions they experience, there were several noted. As previously seen, TP001 referred to feeling frustrated or irritated. Others reported feeling exasperated or annoyed (see table 3). These appear primarily based on experiences of dealing with repeat victims of DV.



**Table 3. Sample of Reported Feelings of Participants Attending DV Incidents**

Response	Participant
"But there's certainly frustration about going back to repeat incidents, particularly when they're the same over and over again, which you can sometimes get. And particularly, to be frank, it's more likely to be given the time of day than anything else. And if it's just at the end of your shift and you thought you might get off in time, and then you're called out to any job, actually, particularly if it's a job like this. It's so irritating"	TP001
"Sometimes you just feel angry with them, for not doing anything about it, about their situation. We turn up and then we get abuse, not just from him but from her to and you think, why bother? She doesn't care so why are we here?"	AP004
"So yeah, of course you can get het-up when you're going, again, going to the same couple and you think, not these two again and you can feel frustrated because you know nothing's going to happen. It's so, well it feels like why am I bothering and you can go in with the wrong attitude".	AP011
"There's been incidents that we've been to and you see the same people time and time again, and one emotion that you might feel is frustration that we're here again, you know, we want to help you, we're here to help you, and we're trying to put these things in place for you and every time you're shutting us down, you know".	IP004

These frank accounts of feelings experienced at the time officers are allocated a "job" are comparable of the type of emotions reported by police participants involved in previous research about DV (Eason, 2016). This found that strong emotions that can have a significant impact on thoughts and behaviours. As we discovered from the literature, de Sousa (2001/1987) believes that emotions and rationality are natural antagonists and that emotions can be a powerful motivator, not always perceived by others as rational. Furthermore, Locke (2005) suggests decisions based upon feelings, particularly strong or overwhelming emotions such as those indicated by the participants (frustration, apprehension, annoyance) cannot be

rationalised as they are built upon unreasonable or illogical thoughts and thought processes. These Locke would say, are ineffective, especially in situations of risk or dangerousness. TP001's response supports this when asked, "Have you ever had a strong feeling when attending a domestic violence incident?"

... and if you go in emotionally frustrated and in a bad mood, then you can't help, but you might deliberately choose to frankly, but you can't help but show that. And then you're into exactly as you said, at the beginning of that whole kind of how I would behave is going to affect how you react to me, and vice versa. And so, you can very easily escalate that very quickly into, you know, a situation where no-one's getting on with anybody else, and the likely outcomes are all linked (TP001).

Nevertheless, when asked this particular question, almost all participants reported they felt able to manage their feelings successfully and thus, they did not affect their performance;

I'd be lying if I said I'd never felt like that 'cause I think everyone's felt like that and they would be lying if they'd not said it. But, generally speaking, now I'm quite happy to go and deal with people that [view 26:37] again and again and again. And the reason for that is because, for whatever they've called us. And there is always things that we can do to put something in place to stop that from happening. Whether it be referrals to support agencies, referrals to social services, referrals to child services. I mean, a lot of the times we go to these repeat, oh it's just a verbal domestic. It's happened 20 times in the past month. But there might be a three or four-year-old child in the address that's been subjugated to this. And if it wasn't for us taking these reports, and reporting it to social services, it would just go completely under the radar. And then that's going to affect them. So I'm happy to go and deal with those situations because that's my, sort of, mentality when I go, and I'll actually try and problem solve things, and come up with a solution (AP006).

I think you just...you get on with it [Interviewer: do you?] As ridiculous as it sounds, there's always worry at the back of your mind thinking, what could happen, that you do just think, that person's called us for a reason and as soon as I start work I know that that's what my job requires. So that's how you have to see it (IP005).

Most of the time when I go out to stuff it's almost like my uniform's a shield...I used to put my uniform on....have you seen Lord of the Rings, yes, and the Two Towers....where just before...they're in the...where the Riders of the Rohan when they're in the big fortress and they're in the....is it the Hornburg, whatever it's called and the....and Aragon's putting on his armour, ready to go out and fight the Orcs and that's why the...that's what goes on in my head....I often, sort of, seen it that way, you know, that's my shield (NP003).

When shown the Goleman (1998b) model again, participants were able to identify the strategies they used for both the 'personal' and 'social' competences, such as emotional awareness, self-regulation and empathy. In the examples above, AP006 demonstrates skills in the 'personal' competence of 'motivation'; initiative – making the best of an opportunity and 'optimism' – a persistent approach to assisting the victim, despite attending numerous times alongside problem-solving skills. IP005 identifies with the 'motivation' competence, striving to meet the standards required by their role. The idea of the uniform being used as a shield is symbolic of the participant's ability to self-regulate their emotions, where NP003 linked their uniform as part of their professional persona, "when I put my body armour on and, yes, it's like preparing for battle" when going to a DV incident.

This idea of the uniform as part of officer resilience relates to the "one symbol, two interpretations" discussion by Flosi (2016) where the uniform would be representative of 'thin blue line', a mechanism of protection for the officer but something different for the victim or offender. Authority perhaps or protector/prosecutor. Regardless, its symbolism appears significant as Flosi suggests.

## Development

Training to develop EI, was generally received well in the interviews with 24 of the participants believing it would be beneficial to theirs and others practice and of those, 19 who would be prepared to undertake some form of training workshop. One participant did mention that EI was referred to in initial training, "...to be fair, when we have our PST, they do talk about things like that, maybe...not in sort of this depth, so I think it probably would be beneficial, yeah" (TP002). The participants clearly recognised the benefits of EI and as Gardner (1983) would suggest, EI development could enhance success and productivity.

Most suggested EI did not feature in any training they had been offered, for instance IP005 noted that they had "not had any information, any packages, no training on emotional intelligence". It is worth noting that these two participants are from different areas and therefore, it raises the question of continuity in training across areas. This is certainly supported in the literature review, where it was found that one Area had trialled some EI training in 2016 (Hill, 2016) but there was no evidence of any in the other three participating Areas.

There was an overwhelming consensus (93%) that NCALT should not be used for any possible training. Not only because the participants did not appear to favour the online system but also because most recognised that to develop the competences outlined by Goleman (1998b), a more traditional, face-to-face environment would be the most beneficial.

NP002, one of the three who did not advocate training, expressed scepticism at their peers' ability to learn. "I mean I'm lucky that I'm able to reflect then change, not everyone can reflect and not everyone can then change if they can reflect" (NP002) but also to say that, despite all the training and skills in EI, a person, including police officers, cannot just stop feeling, or put their feelings to one side;

So, when you wake up in the morning in a bad mood did you choose to be in that bad mood or can you just go, oh, don't be in a bad mood? Highlighting to people things that have happened in their lives like when someone dies, your best mate, your partner, your brother, sister dies and you're gutted and you're tearful and you think the waves going through. If it was just down to you to just get out of there, they know what they're doing, everyone on the planet would say, oh, snap out of it, don't be sad, don't feel this because this is horrible. And everyone tries it and goes, oh, I just don't want to think like this, and they can't stop it....you don't work like that and neither do they, in the same way that you can't suddenly stop crying when you find a dead child they can't suddenly decide to leave the person they've been with for ten years even though he punches them (NP002),

In relating an officer's difficulties in detaching themselves from their feelings is insightful and can be likened to the predicament many DV victims find themselves in. It demonstrates a true empathy for their situation, emotionally and otherwise. This continues as they further explain why they believe training would not be effective:

Because a lot of people see it...they would class it as pink and fluffy, but that's only because they...and they'd just reject that off hand, but that's because it's that sincere ignorance, they don't know what the subject is but they see it as something that it's not so they won't engage with it (NP002).

This implies that officer may not only be unsuccessful in learning from the training but may also be unwilling, thinking it is not part of the police officer's role. Although IP005 was not wholly opposed to the idea, they thought that rather than provide training directly to frontline officers, RO's should undertake some form of training and

disseminate EI through role modelling; “if you’ve got a supervisor that is displaying some of these [EI competences], it naturally makes the officer try harder”. In doing so would reduce the need to abstract higher numbers of officers to attend. As Kumari and Pandey (2011) point out, attitudes are contagious and so the idea of training EI at supervisory level so it can be role-modelled down is a sensible alternative, though how effective it would be and how willing RO’s might be to undertake it, would need to be explored and evaluated. Having time to undertake training, was raised by many of those participants who were keen for EI training and as we saw from the initial comments made by TP003, especially because most thought a workshop style of event would be the most beneficial.

Not all were positive that individual EI development was beneficial or necessary, for the policing role. IP011, for example, suggested “It falls outside the traditional role of the policeman, it’s about empathy and, you have to be passionate about it to be able to use it to err, to err its best, most effectively”. They went on to say that they felt it was “not always helpful to act instinctively, it’s good to step back and because if we just err, behave instinctively we can act on our emotions, which aren’t always a good thing”. They continued to explain that although they thought EI is a useful tool, for those officers whose EI was under-developed, acting on instinct could have a detrimental effect.

we would be naive to think we could take bias out of decision-making wouldn’t we?.... and if we, if they [police officers] can’t regulate themselves their feeling they just act on their emotions, which err, they sort of drive their gut instinct.

This is an insightful yet contrary comment. IP011 recognises how underdeveloped EI can result in poor decision-making yet highlights how the use of self-regulation and empathy are important in effective police work. What they neglected to identify was how training would support them in successful self-regulation and improving empathy. Nevertheless, they also described how, if used properly, EI can initiate challenges in situations where “what she [a DV victim] is saying does not match the look on her face” (IP011) and therefore, agreed EI as a potential aspect for staff development but with a cautionary note.

Leadership was the focus of AP008’s response to EI training. A RO, AP008 suggested that training officers in a skill that would promote leadership would not be useful to them as individual officers or the organisation. Indeed, they suggested that it could be risky, as frontline PCs should not be making decisions without referring back to their ROs;

The police is such a strange organisation.... it really is, I’ve known, there’s nothing like it. For me, in the police you have to have leaders, and there has to be a point where you have to have, for example PCs....there is a time within the police where you have to tell people to do something and for people to just go off piece and make their own decisions about something can be quite dangerous. And so yes, everyone should have the opportunity to lead, and get to know what makes a good leader and have the opportunity and learn and have access to that [training] but that has to be, errm, controlled quite tightly. Because although my staff, I trust my staff to do a good job and to do the right thing but there’s always a nagging doubt in my mind, have they actually done what I set them to do? and they don’t necessarily see it but if I gave all the PCs in my shift *carte blanche* to be leaders and to make that decision I don’t think some of them would have the ability to take that up....and they would make wrong decisions based on a false sense of confidence of leadership ability, if that makes sense (AP008).

It is unclear whether this was an indication of rank assertion or a lack of trust in PCs to follow procedure but it does reinforce the rigidity reported in the attending officer's professional discretion. The idea of controlling who should receive training and indeed, who is a capable leader, is reflective of the concept of 'in-group' behaviour described by Loftus (2012). On this occasion, however, it is in protection of the 'middle management' category of the cultural hierarchy offered by Manning (2007), particularly as they were in favour of RO's undertaking the training, to improve their leadership of the lower ranks. This conjures the idea of leadership as a symbol of rank rather than individual ability that can be effective in the policing of DV incidents and within this context, symbolic of a subcultural phenomenon. Yet it was muted by several of the participants that they attend 'jobs' in solo, therefore, a PC leading at an incident is inevitable and contradictory to what AP008 suggests is appropriate. For instance, IP005 stated, "you attend incidents on your own so a lot of your decision making is based on what you're thinking at the time". AP008 suggested that if any training in EI is offered to the lower ranks, it should be delivered outside the organisation and by an "outsider", as the culture and terminology of the police may bias it; perhaps the very rhetoric that is apparent in their own notion of leadership and police hierarchy.

## **Summary**

This theme highlights the mixed understandings of EI and how, for many, it is not recognised as emotional intelligence but labelled as a gut feeling or instinct, "spidey sense" or, in more formal terms, professional curiosity. Regardless of the label however, the participants were all able to recognise competences in themselves



and how these are used in their practice. It was interesting that one of the most common competence identified was empathy. Although not always articulated as such, empathy was demonstrated in how understanding DV, the victim and the importance of regulating emotions was central to being able to support them and the victims in the process of dealing with the crisis and risk assessment. In doing so, it ensured the protection of those who are vulnerable. This was applied in the way they communicated with the victim, what action they took and how they conducted a risk assessment.

It is also of interest that the participants were able to associate a tangible physiological feeling with EI and how this formed part of their decision to take a different approach to the situation. The feeling of butterflies, a nervousness or fluttering in the stomach was the most common and this, alongside the dissonance between victim rhetoric and behaviour aroused enough suspicion or curiosity to investigate the incident more thoroughly.

The benefit of training to develop EI was generally considered beneficial although how this would be delivered would need to carefully consider factors such as time, venue and who will be delivering. Whilst many of the participants were open to the idea of training for the development of EI, there was clearly some opposition in relation to the 'lower ranking participants' developing leadership skills but that it should be rationed to just ROs. This appears to be reflective of what is already happening within the force, where any EI training located in the literature review was through the College of Policing, which targets those of rank. It is only if individual

areas decide to implement independent training such as that undertaken by area C (Hill, 2016) that EI forms part of the 'lower participants' professional development.

## Chapter 4: “I’ve got it but he hasn’t”

The initial responses to the question about understanding the concept of EI was, as reported, quite mixed, with many participants reporting little, or no, understanding. However, when shown the Goleman (1998b) Competency Framework, participants were able to relate to many of the competences and give examples of how these were understood and practiced. This implies that the term ‘emotional intelligence’ is not something that has been discussed or raised as a concept central to policing or, that it has been labelled something else. In policing, this could be the idea of professional curiosity, a term attached to the idea of thinking ‘outside the box’ and acting on intangible information rather than just the tangible; looking at the situation holistically rather than just the physical environment.

### **Self-confidence**

It was extraordinary that once given the Goleman (1998b) framework, how many participants reported that they felt they possessed most or all of the competences on the framework as seen in table 4. As the responses show, this was common across all four areas and participants believed they had a high-level of EI competence and applied it in their practice. Their ‘truth’ (Krueger & Neuman, 2006, p. 79). However, it is also indicative of a collective attitudinal meaning that the participants placed upon the research and/or the researcher. EI as a symbol of police effectiveness understood by the researcher – after all, the research focuses on EI competences and their feature in police work – and thus their response to them as someone of higher standing within the context of that research (Stryker, 1980; Stryker, 2008).

**Table 4. Sample of Participant Responses When Shown the Goleman Model**

Response	Participant
Me personally, I'd say that I use and have all of those skills. And obviously with the job that I do, there's also a lot of other people have got the same set of skills and the same – [not to say the 04:08] same ways of dealing with things, but we've got the same understanding. But yeah, from a personal point of view, I can display those, I do display those.	IP004
I can see that I have most of these, certainly I could say I am empathic and good communication skills. You have to don't you? To do the job I mean (smiled and dropped head).	AP010
I always say, I have a very high degree of empathy. And sometimes to a ridiculous level where I'll always, sort of, understand, and a lot of the time take pity on people, based on...I put myself in their position very easily	AP006
I think, without sounding ridiculously big headed I would say everything. I think all these are essential skills to be a police officer. We've constantly got to read between the lines, people are not truthful with us. Unfortunately, that is...yeah. So I would say that I am very emotionally aware, I always have been.	IP006
Yeah, all of them, yeah.	NP004
... and safe to say that I think I have most of these. Does that sound a bit up myself (laughing) but really, all police officers have these skills as they are needed to do the job. If they don't, well, I mean, if they don't then they must find it [the job] really flaming hard. Mind you, some of what you see is really poor.	TP011

However, as with the last example from TP011, some of the participants suggested that although they possessed many, or all of the competences, there were others who did not, “I’ve got it but he hasn’t” (TP009) and they were critical of them where poor practice was considered directly related to a lack of EI (table 5);

**Table 5. Example of Participant Responses in Their Assessment of Others**

Response	Participant
<p>So policey police would be people who they love being a police officer so much that it's almost too much and they have expectations of people that are almost, I am here, you will now do as I say and I can talk to you how I want. They'll call it being...it'll sound almost rude but they say they're being straight to the point and I think they're actually missing the point that you can engage with people in a way that's far more effective, give the same message packaged differently, and they'll happily walk out of the house or they'll just respond better because you're being nicer and you're showing greater understanding.</p>	NP002
<p>So I might have that little moment of, urgh, in the car on the way, but that kind of stays in the car, you get out and it's a fresh face, right, what's gone on, let's talk about it, let's talk about the options. So, personally I don't let it, but I do know that there are people that will go into a job and they'll just go, what's the point in even trying, because they're not going to be interested, they're not going to make a complaint, they're not going to want to know... they lose interest and they don't look at the bigger picture, they're just, well, let's just deal with what we've got, what do you want to do today, you just want him out the way, yeah, okay, fine, we'll get rid of him (animated when speaking, shrugged and put hands up to shoulder height, symbolising defeat).</p>	IP004
<p>I think the difficulty with policing at the moment is that we go to so much things, we go to such a wide variety of things. It's very easy to become detached from situations. So you get some officers and, through no disrespect to them, the people who are like this, but they go to things, and they just deal with it very robotic 'cause they've been to it however many times before.</p>	AP006
<p>...as well as being in a lot of stressful situations in work, conflict or when there's physical threats, I've always found I work quite well in, compared to other people who I can see shut down, and then go into various states of ineffectiveness .... either losing their temper or becoming so much tunnel vision, that they're not effective.</p>	IP009
<p>I mean, I've worked with people before that have got wound up very quickly and perhaps sort of...you know, kind of they've lost their temper .... Quite often the most common is where a colleague is making a situation worse by biting back at people who are giving him grief.</p>	TP002

So, whilst it was agreed that a high level of EI competences are necessary and should form an integral part of a police officer's skills set, it is evident that many thought their peers EI was of a low-level. Given the participant's self-confidence in their own high level of EI it is somewhat contradictory that they suggest others do not have the same level of competence; those who they suggest are lacking in EI competence may be the same individuals that are confident they do have a high level. This disparity could be for a number of reasons; not having the ability to recognise or acknowledge others EI abilities, recognising own abilities but not applying them in a way that is recognisable to others or unfounded belief that they possess EI skills. This could only be ascertained by conducting further research, by assessing each participant's EI using a tool such as the EQ-I (Bar-On, 2006) and observation of police officers in practice.

## **Experience**

It was suggested by some of the participants, that high level EI competence were derived from experience, experience of policing, of dealing with DV incidents and working with the victims. Building on their disclosure of confidence in the skill of empathy, AP006 talked about how this has developed through their experience as an officer;

... I can put myself in people's shoes. And I am quite good, now - not necessarily when I first joined the police, but I've developed this over time - now I'm very good at talking to people on their level. I feel confident I can go into most situations, and I'll be able to talk to somebody on their level. Which is quite a difficult thing to do, because there's so many different emotions and experiences that people are going through in a set time. Some people will just fail to read it, and fail to talk to them in the appropriate way. So that's something I feel like I've developed, and I'm quite happy with how I do that at the moment (AP006).

Other participants also took this view, for example.

It [EI] definitely, is definitely better with experience. The more you do something the more you learn (AP012).

I think empathy is something that you get through experience, you get to understand people better the longer you've worked with them and in this job, well with domestics, you get to know the repeaters, the ones who constantly call and you can begin to relate to their problems because you know them so well by then. It just takes time (AP004).

When IP007 was discussing how they have developed their 'professional curiosity' they talked about learning from on-the-job experience;

So I think, okay, you've told me that but your body language is saying something else, so something else has happened. I think that comes with experience in dealing with incidents (IP007).

Experience gained from other aspects of life prior to joining the police, was also highlighted by participants as important to individual EI growth.

... think it is, but it comes with experience as well, I've worked door security for 10 years on clubs, I've worked in a prison, I've been a single parent and the way I've parented and been brought up is completely different (NP001).

I think life experience, you know, other jobs, how you're brought up, all that experience, I think that helps to in thinking or looking more into things, not taking them at face value (TP013).

Life experience, whether in the role as a police officer or other life roles, was considered as part of a set of transferable skills that enhanced their EI competences. What Prinz (2004) might have termed as informing their 'gut instinct', shaping reflexivity, empathy, social understandings and understanding the impact of self on others.

## Age

An officer's age arose several times when discussing with participants, their perception of their peers' level, and/or employment of EI. Youth was the most predominant age factor and was seemingly useful in some situations;

Say, if you are double crewed, and my crew mate's better at talking to younger people, you know what I mean, because I'm old, and I'm generally with a younger person, I could step back and let them do it (AP003).

AP003 reported they felt that when talking to younger DV victims, that a younger officer may gain a better rapport merely because they were younger themselves. The participant viewed the younger age of their colleague as a predictor of their building better rapport with younger members of the public rather than attributing it to their EI. In doing so, it is clear that their social competence, most specifically of communication and rapport building, is underdeveloped. That they lack confidence in their own ability to communicate with different sectors of the community or, prefer not to. In either event, it appears their EI is at a lower level in relation to this particular competence.

Given AP003's comments in regard to time being a limited resource (see page 100), an alternative analysis of this comment could be of time saving; using the younger colleague to communicate with young people may save time in what AP003 called a pressurised environment. Nevertheless, in the absence of a younger officer, underdeveloped communication skills inevitably have a negative impact on social interaction.



Interestingly, youth as a useful tool did not relate directly with their perception of the younger officers EI competence and in further discussion, it appeared that many officers were resolute in their beliefs about age and skill set.

We went to quite a violent domestic with him and I was speaking to the female and the next minute it all erupted in the lounge, and when we eventually got him he said, I'm not having a snotty-nosed little kid telling me how to live my life. He said, someone in his 30s being told by someone in uniform who looks like a baby (IP007).

It's [EI] developed with experience and I have as well, you know, I'm not perfect, I've got wound up myself. But over the years - especially if you're new to it as well - but over the years, I've sort of, taken lessons from other people that I've worked with as well, to try and improve...(TP002).

Although the mean average age of the participants fell within the national average of 26-40, it was at the higher end of the spectrum at 39.5 years. This may account for some of the rhetoric behind the idea that EI grows with experience and the idea of youth being a detrimental factor. For some of the participants, youth was contributory to a lower level EI, due to its direct correlation with on-the-job experience. The younger you are, the less time you have had to gain experience in the role. For example,

I think, I mean, this is me making assumptions, but a lot of them are young, they're not married, they might find some of the questions intrusive, there might be uncomfortable asking those questions, whereas I think with myself, I'm so much longer in the tooth and experience and because you can see what actually ultimately it results in death if it carries on, you know, and it is serious and I think I'm not afraid to ask any question, because some questions are difficult, but if you word it well or explain, to me, if you always explain why you're doing it, people understand why you're doing it and how it can help them, the benefits for them as well and the benefits to the police (NP004).

In this example, NP004 suggests that young officers are not experienced in DV and that they may struggle communicatively with victims, in direct contradiction to AP003.

In the next example, TP002 dismisses experience through the education system;

Because they are new and have been to university they think they are set up with everything they need to know, but being able to talk to people properly, well it takes more than a degree you know? And can you imagine, how a couple constantly having the police turn up, in their forty something and some young copper trying to tell them how they should behave (AP010).

However, many programmes of education, particularly those that lead to work that is specialised, educate collaboratively with the sector providing opportunities to gain operational experience, through Special Constables for example. Moreover, the offenders and officer's assumption young people do not possess good levels of EI competence is ill-considered, as we all possess varying levels of EI (Goleman, 1998a). Moreover, the College of Policing 2020 vision is precisely to ensure the recruitment of all new officers are through the undergraduate or apprenticeship route, suggesting the value understood through the higher education process.

The value of education and training is however, clearly acknowledged by IP006, when talking about the observation of EI in their colleagues at DV incidents;

My honest opinion, having seen it both sides as well, I think the officers that are more newer have a better awareness, believe it or not, which you would think... That shocked me actually, because you would think people with more experience... And I'm not talking about everybody, but you'd think people with more experience would be more in tuned to domestic violence and emotional intelligence. I don't know if it's particularly officers that have been on response long, and for them they have become desensitised. And for them it's like oh, another domestic (IP006).

When asked why they thought this was, their response was as follows:

I think it's the same ish recruitment, but I think it's the training and as I say, because they have only been privy to this new culture where we always take positive action. It's drilled into you in your training now, basically if you get in the crap it will be over domestics, because that is where the situation is...(IP006)

So whilst there were some who felt that youth was problematic, particularly when dealing with DV incidents involving offenders and victims who were older, youth was also seen as a positive factor where previous experience had not had the opportunity to be a negative influence;

younger officers, newer officers are definitely better at going in and being less judgemental if that's the right word, because they haven't got the same level of – I wouldn't say experience – yeah, I suppose, they haven't got the same level of experience that we've got (IP004).

IP006 and IP004 raise an interesting perspective on experience as contributory to EI. What they are suggesting, is that experience can lead to biases in a long-term officer's approach to dealing with victims of DV whereas, those younger officers who have not had those experiences, are keener to engage, unhindered by emotions of frustration, annoyance or irritation reported by participants that comes with experience of attending many incidents. This implies that when new in the field, young and/or new officers are more willing to employ EI competences such as active listening, empathy, optimism, working collaboratively with the victim, because they do not need to self-regulate the strong emotions felt by those who have experienced the same situations many times. Consequently, although young officers do possess and employ EI at the beginning of their career, over time, as serving officers, their ability or willingness somehow diminishes.

## Summary

The idea that officers can recognise EI in themselves yet are able to identify where their peers fail to either possess or employ it was over-whelming in the interviews. Three reasons were apparent in this theme – self-confidence in their own EI, how both job and personal experience has contributed to it and how this is directly related to age; experience comes with longer life and attending DV incidents as a serving officer.

The age factor has raised an interesting concept. Youth is clearly considered a disability by the majority when it comes to experience – how can you benefit from experience when you are still young? The general perception of age and level of EI is that it grows with experience, which inevitably comes with age and time in the force. However, the notion that on-the-job experience may also hinder the growth and/or employment of EI is very significant, as is the idea that new officers may in fact, be better at dealing with DV victims because they are not tarnished with the negative experience of attending multiple incidents.

The impact of this finding is two-fold. Firstly, it is of concern that at some point in an officer's career, their EI diminishes. It is assumed that this is fluid, different for each officer, dependent on many factors such as level of EI to start with, who they work with and their experiences of DV incidents and policing as a whole. Without further investigation, it is unknown when this will occur in an officer's employment journey. Secondly, however, it is a welcome finding in terms of the new recruiting ethos and the desire for cultural change. By recruiting from cohorts of undergraduates who have a theoretical understanding of evidence-based practice, therefore

understanding DV, victim profiles, benefits of interventions and multi-agency working amongst other things, the force may be able to begin to bridge the gap needed for change. This could support the maintenance of EI and challenge the negative attitudes associated with DV incidents. To understand the full implications of this finding, further research would need to be undertaken.

## Chapter 5: “The voice in my ear”

Originally, the components of this theme categorised under theme four, 'Working in a blame culture' because austerity appeared a popular factor of blame for particular actions or non-actions. However, given the current socio-political climate and the way in which, the proceeding theme developed, through a more thorough analysis it was felt that this theme, merited consideration separately. Whilst austerity is an important factor that should not be ignored, there were other factors within theme four that may have been overshadowed, with the notion of 'cut-backs' detracting focus from other, more cultural findings.

### **Austerity**

The measures taken to cut public spending has, undoubtedly, had a significant impact on the police and these measures have resulted a dramatic cut in regular officers, from 143,734 full-time equivalent police officers in England and Wales at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010 to 122,404 at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 (Hargreaves, Husband and Linehan, 2018), a decrease of 21,330 or 14.8%. The impact of this on frontline staff is evident in some of the responses obtained in this research and although only a small part of the overall data obtained in the study, it was felt important to include on its own merit.

During the interviews, almost all participants had an ear piece or a multitude of other electronic devices, mobile phone, radios, switched to silent but sat on their shoulders or on the desk in front of them, anticipating that flashing or beeping, indicating a call

that required their attention. This brought a sense of unease to a number of the interviews, where participants appearing unable to relax, constantly ready for action was observable throughout the process, despite them having explicit permission to take the time out for the research; “everyone’s always in a hurry because you’ve always got the radio chirruping, saying, get yourself to the next job” (TP001).

This ‘sitting on the edge of your seat’ stance was not only evident in the interviews, but also in trying to arrange interviews, finding venues, times and dates, arranging and re-arranging. Staffing appeared the primary concern for participants in different aspects of their role, for instance NP001 talked about the pressures of legislation and policy that have to be adhered to that puts pressure on both ROs to ensure targets are met and the officers who have to do the work to meet them;

We had a scenario the other day, there was too many prisoners and we’re getting told, you will stay and you will finish, you will finish. They’re going to get it, because they’re the ones that are saying, there’s clock time, you’ve got to deal with them, you know .... but the inspector will look at you as if to say, well there’s numbers on the board, they’re not interested what you’ve got in your tray, they’re not interested if you’re exhausted, because somewhere like this, if you get a decent drugs job or a domestic job or a violent job, you can guarantee if it’s a proper job and you secure charges, you’re going to be here for 12 to 14 hours and you’re waiting on everybody else, like, CPS, you could be waiting for mental health in custody, you could be in a queue in custody. They don’t understand that you reach a point where you are mentally exhausted (NP001).

This is suggestive of the time-consuming aspect of policing and how, target pressure, impacts on officer’s well-being, who have to bear high workloads and work longer hours. One RO told me that before shift had even started, that there were more 'jobs' to go to than they had staff in on shift and therefore the starting point

was, if anything else came in, there was no one to deploy, or officers already at an incident would need to finish up quickly.

A participant from another area, Area D, described how "the voice in my ear" (TP011) is a constant prompt to "move on to the next job", minimising the time they felt they could spend with a victim. Making time to build rapport and trust is very limited according to TP011, because of the constant need to respond to another incident; "...there's no time to be empathic or build a rapport, so disclosure doesn't happen. Why would they?". Thus, participants are suggesting, that even if they wanted to employ EI, there was not enough time to do so. A way to resolve this is suggested in the following;

To be honest, on response, you're so pressurised, they're always shouting at you for the next job, the next job, if you go to a domestic incident, and somebody says, he pushed me into the fridge, and they don't seem to be upset or anything like that. They've called the police, it's the hundredth time they've called the police, you're just going to whack that report out, you're going to go through the Dash, anything changed from last time, boom, and go .... But, if you go there and the person's a quivering wreck, it might be the same thing, he's pushed me into the fridge, but they're, you know, really upset, shaking, cowered, you're going to spend more time with them, you just are (AP003).

AP003 went on to say that in assessing the victim and the situation, they can then decide "how much time to devote to it". In the example above, longer in the latter situation and they need to do this assessment as they have this constant pressure to move on to the next 'job'. Their assessment is based upon, what they know about the victim and the relationship and how they present at the incident:

you turn up, and it's somebody you've been out to lots and lots, and they're reporting the same thing over and again, and they're just very



blaze about it. They will be, I want him fucking down, you know, you're going to be like that, and you know nothing ever comes of it, they never make a statement, they never pursue it, they've just phoned you to punish the other person. You're going to take their details, I mean, you know what Dash is, you're not going to go through it, you're just going to go through it quickly. You're going to say, we were out yesterday, we went through all these questions, did anything change from yesterday? No. Right, boom, I'm not going to go through it. That's what you're going to do (AP003).

The factors on which, this risk assessment is based, however, are questionable. As we have seen from the literature, there are many victim fatalities like Mavis Cliff for example, that are subject to repeat victimisation and who did not receive an effective police response. Although repeat victims may seem time consuming, a full and proper response, including the DASH assessment needs to be completed. The idea the DASH assessment can rely upon the victim reporting any changes from the previous day is not an effective method of assessment and, indeed, that the police have been called-out twice, in 24 hours is, in itself, a risk factor. Feeling that they do not have time to undertake the DASH, is of concern though not uncommon, as found in previous research (Eason, 2016).

Interestingly, this participant had had criminological input through Higher Education, law training and operational training, which included the evidence-base to the DASH, typologies of DV and abuse and victimology. This was a surprising response therefore and perhaps indicative of a police force that are under inordinate pressure to perform to the same standard with less available staff. However, this is also indicative of the inconsistency in risk assessment found in the PEEL Report (HMIC, 2015) and is symptomatic of the way in which DV continues to be a victim 'blameworthy' offence that sits within the 'rubbish' category; a spurious crime (Reiner, 2010).

## **Summary**

Albeit a short theme, there is a clear message from participants that the lack of staff is having an impact on them and their ability to practice effectively, including the employment of EI at DV incidents. The result of this is spending less time with victims that could be used to build empathy and trust, which in turn could lead to disclosure, prosecution and/or measures that would secure future protection. It also appears to be impacting on the way in which risk assessments are being undertaken, which could jeopardise the safety of the victim(s) and/or prolong their victimhood.

What can also be seen within the analysis of this theme, is that the cultural norm surrounding understanding DV and the somewhat traditional views of how it should be dealt with are still occurring, despite a higher level of training and knowledge input. It would be misleading to generalise this as the norm however it does fit with the notion of cultural influence identified in the previous theme, where younger officer's willingness to employ EI in their approach to and problem-solving of DV incidents, appears to diminish with length of service.

## Chapter 6: Working in a blame culture

Muir (2018) and The Police Foundation (2018) both emphasise the need for the police force to shift from a culture of blame to that of a learning environment that the PEEL Report (HMIC, 2015) advocates; moving away from the criticism that locates fault in individual officers than the policy and process framework within which they operate. This is in line with vast majority of views of the participants in this study. It is within this theme that the participants became most animated in interview. This appeared to be associated with emotions of frustration, fear, disheartenment or disillusion. A shrug of the shoulders or raising of the hands in surrender that signified defeat or total powerlessness was a common occurrence and featured particularly when discussing the positive action policy. For some, a feeling of persistent blame appeared to be a fundamental aspect of police culture that is the motivating factor to work strictly to guidance, regardless if their instinct suggested it was not the most appropriate action for the DV victim and is restrictive in terms of employing EI in decision-making. Nevertheless, there were some who challenged this and shared their rationale.

### Policy and Practice

Views on the policy for positive action were varied. AP006 explained how their Area had a specific arrest policy for "suspects of domestic violence .... positive action" following an HMIC inspection that suggested, "arrests for domestic violence is a positive thing". TP001 felt that the framework within which they operate gave clear guidelines on how they should respond to DV incidents and should not be questioned, stating;

you know, the law is very clear, and it's not my job to interpret it as I see fit. Because that's a very dangerous thing for me to start doing in my role. You know, the law is set out for me to apply not for me to create (TP001).

They went on to rationalise their view;

...that's the physics side of it, and actually the chaos and drama and nonsense that is everyday life is biology and much more complex. And yes, you have the competing dynamic which is you've got to do what's right .... So positive action simplifies things, you know, it's certainly a help to think it's one less thing you have to check off in your personal mental script without, am I going to arrest someone or not? (TP001).

Other participants differed in their opinion, stating that they felt their performance was being "judged" on whether or not they were making arrests at DV incidents and how many they made. Whilst they were cognisant of the rationale behind the arrest policy, they felt this was ill-informed;

Their [the HMIC] thinking is that, if you arrest people then less people report domestic violence, there must be less domestic violence. But sometimes you go to a situation, and my general understanding is that if somebody can make a very informed decision about what's gone on, then they should act on that ...(AP006).

This statement implies that informed assessments are being ignored in favour of the organisational drive to implement positive action (by arresting the offender) regardless of any other information.

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Conversely, a RO suggested the policy was really helpful in deciding to remove the offender from the property, when there was a clear risk of physical harm, but where no physical harm had been caused, it was "just an emotional dispute" (IP002) any

decision not to arrest could be supported by the RO on duty. This suggested not only that emotional disputes were not considered harmful by the RO, but also that the policy could be circumvented with their permission. A permission based upon rank but not first-hand knowledge.

This was also the experience of NP002, who reported a case involving an offender threatening the victim with a shotgun. The instruction from their RO, was to arrest the victim for wasting police time because no weapons were found at the offender's address. The participant was reluctant to do this when presented with the victim and assessing her as "high risk... off the scale" (NP002). They advised their RO that the firearms team had gone to the wrong address however, the RO insisted they continue to arrest the victim; "you need to either arrest her for wasting police time or go and arrest him". Following their gut instinct, they reported a different way of taking "positive action". They referred the case to the specialist RO in the Domestic Abuse Unit, who immediately agreed their decision not to arrest but instead 'target harden' the victims home.

So my positive action is to speak with the DAU and explain that the risk of taking positive action now actually makes the risk off the scale to something we cannot manage in any way, shape or form and that they best way to protect her is to [...] protect the house (NP002).

Using effective communication skills (rapport and active listening) and 'reading' the emotions of the victim, NP002 identified that although the victim's call was not strictly accurate, she tailored her account to receive an immediate response because she was frightened. The victim was well aware of the offender owning a shotgun and NP002, also knowing the offender, was able to empathise with the victim's emotional

state. They knew that arresting him because of her report would cause her to be at greater risk long-term. Arresting him on separate charges relating to firearms was the preferred and safer option and which, was initiated some days later, once the gun had been found. NP002 was quite clear in interview, that in this situation, positive action would likely have resulted in serious injury or even fatality.

AP006 supports this, reporting, "From my dealings with situations I know that if I go to a domestic situation when people have called us in a point of crisis .... we don't necessarily listen to them" but rather are focused on adhering strictly to policy regardless of what the victim has to say or what your EI is telling you they are able to action for themselves. For example, AP006 explains how their experience has highlighted how not actively listening to the victim can lead to poor decision-making;

... sometimes you go to a situation, and my general understanding is that if somebody can make a very informed decision about what's gone on, [inaudible]...the situation, not obviously immediately after when it's happened, then we should be giving them some control of the situation. 'cause I think domestic violence is, in itself, something where the person doesn't have any control. So I think to also take that away from them, from a policing point of view, isn't always the best way to handle it (AP006).

This is an insightful reflection of how, through listening openly, taking an active interest in the victims concerns and working collaboratively with them, the police can empower victims, rather than taking the strict 'make an arrest' policy that has become a target on which individuals and Areas are being measured. "We're being judged on how many arrests we do for domestic violence" (AP006) and although AP006 acknowledges that in some situations this can have a constructive outcome, they felt it restricted the officer's ability to assess the uniqueness of an incident and appraise the benefits of making an arrest. This is indicative of the dilemma NP002

encountered in the case above, where they challenged their RO and refused to make the arrest because they believed it would heighten the risk to the victim. These challenges are not specifically of their superior officer, they are of the current political culture that dominates the way in which the police manage DV incidents. Such challenges could be perceived, by the organisation and the RO, as insubordinate, opposing the rigidity of rank structure and discretion accountability.

### **Culture and accountability**

When discussing how EI features in the implementation of policy such as positive action and risk assessment, some of the participants raised the issue of culture in accountability, how it contributes to the management of DV incidents and attitudes about DV at individual and organisational level. "I think the culture around officers and domestic abuse now has been that we have to throw the kitchen sink at it".

IP006 describes this as a change from previous approaches to DV.

We've had a real culture change with domestics. So the people in the last five years are in tune to the new culture. But people prior to that, I've got colleagues who can talk ten years ago, eight years ago where we'd turn up and they'd just say sort it out yourself. But that was the well-known what would happen and that was policy (IP006).

From what IP006 is describing, it appears traditional attitudes towards DV as a crime and police business, rather than private business, has in recent years, experienced a cultural change, particularly with the implementation of a policy that directs how they should respond. This is reiterated by TP014 who spoke of a change in the way they felt colleagues viewed DV and in particular the victims;

It used be sort of put to one side, but now everyone seems to be taking it more seriously. It's like, you know, the culture has changed and suddenly everyone is told that they have to take action rather than just leaving people to sort it out by them self (TP014).

Nevertheless, there is evidence already shown in this research (IP002 page 151), that there remains a lack of understanding or continued attitude towards DV that does not acknowledge the breadth of violent conduct that can both cause harm and escalate risk. There is also evidence of a reluctance to make decisions contrary to policy, as there is such a culture of blame, that officers feel unable to justify all their actions to ensure full accountability;

Well, you've got to be a bit careful really because you can be a bit...it's easy to be judgemental and you've got to try and weigh up, you know, what's in front of you and act in a way that you think is the right thing to do really. I mean, I suppose you could be wrong but are you going to take that chance?...with the risk factor, are you really going to take that chance if you've got [a] feeling? Then, you know, as long as you can justify your actions why you did things, then I suppose you would still move forward with what your hunch was (TP002).

The issue TP002 is raising here is the justification of actions based upon EI - "are you really going to take that chance if you've got [a] feeling?" - because the issue of accountability is so stringent, more stringent than any other criminal justice agency according to Muir (2018). So TP002 questions whether it is worth officers taking the chance that their justification is not acceptable and rather than respond in a way that *feels* appropriate, to follow policy which may not.

This reflected the general feelings of the participants with one reporting the accountability process was more like the "finger of blame" (IP009) than a fair process of investigation. This was also explained as adding to feelings of frustration and annoyance;



...so you go out and try and do a good job but then you've got them upstairs breathing down your neck, and so taking the initiative just doesn't seem right. I guess you're trying to please too many people and it gets really crap, sorry, but you know, really annoying that you can't be trusted to do the best thing. After all, it's what we're supposed to be doing isn't it? (IP009).

This lack of confidence in frontline officers, the 'lower participants' (Manning, 2007), appears to form part of the working culture of the police. As stated earlier, AP008, a RO supports this notion of a cultural mistrust and fear by suggesting they are always concerned that an officer has not completed the task they were given. This must entrench the feelings of accountability as individual blame, scapegoating rather than an organisational procedure to protect and develop operational policing, widening the subcultural gap and oppressing initiative, which must include EI.

## **Fear**

During interviews, there was certainly a feeling that the organisation was unsupportive across all Areas. Indeed, one of the interviewees, when starting the interview, ducked under their arms and looked around asking if anyone could hear our conversation. Whilst seemingly an amusing animation, conducted with funny facial expression, the participant was very seriously mindful of their surroundings and wanted reassurance that no one could hear and that recordings would not be made available to their superiors. In fact, despite signing the Consent Form and reading the Participant Information Form *and* the interview opening reassuring the participants of confidentiality, several asked if their responses would remain anonymous at the start and sometimes during interviews. This was indicative of participants' heightened concerns regarding anonymity and repercussions, when their responses may be regarded as in conflict with the organisational ethos.

An example of this is when discussing risk assessment. TP001 talked about how “we obsess about risk. Probably rightly because, you know, people get sacked for getting it wrong. But there isn’t really a coherent, I’m not aware of a coherent model that can really, truly assess risk” suggesting the DASH form, whilst offering a template through which risk can be assessed, was not the most efficient. “It’s hard to navigate a conversation around the topics you’d need to cover just on a, kind of, here let’s talk about stuff” (TP001) and as NP001 pointed out, there are certain questions, which are not applicable to some domestic relationships. For example, a homosexual relationship “...you’ve got a male party or you’ve got a same sex relationship that’s gay, like, gay men, they automatically lose a point, because how are they going to be pregnant”. However, both participants and several others were very aware of the consequences of not completing the DASH. Not in terms of supervisory reprimand but in terms of accountability and a fear of “...not doing it just brings the focus of attention, that you, that it’s part of the policy, so you have to do it” (AP008).

It is understandable therefore, that the attitude and feelings prompted when tasked to attend a DV incident are not positive. “There’s a lot of negativity around domestic violence, a lot, and people don’t want to know, people are fearful of the risks with domestics” (NP001), NP001 indicating that officers are fearful that if their risk assessment is not accurate and the situation escalates to serious injury or fatality, that they will be blamed for not ‘getting it right’. This can result in officers taking risks themselves for fear of the repercussions. For example, IP005 explained how they often go to a DV incident on their own, attending an unknown situation but are compelled to go despite any danger to themselves;

“you know that you’re going to someone that needs your help and you think, if I don’t go and I don’t deal with it, then that person...I’m putting that person at risk .... there’s always worry at the back of your mind thinking, what could happen, that you do just think, that person’s called us for a reason and as soon as I start work I know that that’s what my job requires” (IP005)

As a female officer, they identified how much more difficult it can be given the type of offender they are dealing with;

It can be difficult sometimes, especially when you know that there are people that aren’t very nice that you’re going to, that don’t like females, that don’t like females in uniform. That can be quite difficult, especially domestic...male domestic violence perpetrators...yeah so that can be quite difficult because you know that they won’t have a problem being abusive (IP005).

Placing themselves at risk appears to be a regular occurrence across all areas, as more and more officers are deployed to ‘jobs’, on their own. Some attributed this to the cutbacks of staff but there was also concern about how procedure put them more at risk. The pressure of “making sure something is done” (AP004) regardless of how the officer would implement it or the long-term outcomes for the victim is a growing fear. That “doing anything else can just result in your being pulled in and questioned about it...there’s so much pressure to, you’re criticised if you don’t you know?” is significant of this.

## **Summary**

This final theme is evidence of a systemic culture of individual accountability that, rather than be used in a developmental way, is perceived to serve as a useful scapegoat mechanism- rather than identifying learning, can apportion blame that distracts from the organisation or indeed political interference. Blanket policy-making

as an effective strategy for any organisation has long been disputed (Sokoloff & DuPont, 2005) and within the police force, this is no different. The 'one size fits all' approach to DV is influential in policing culture, whether that is the "sort it out yourself" (IP006) well-known but unwritten policy or the positive action policy that suppresses other perhaps more emotionally intelligent ways of dealing with the incident. Regardless of which, the inevitable difference in how and which policy is interpreted and applied, there are resultant repercussions for the victim(s). This is evident from the participant's accounts of how officers decide to implement it but also how RO's use it as a tool for leadership.

What was also evident was the culture of blame that participants felt they operated in and how this influenced their practice. Challenging policy and not taking positive action is risky particularly when they did not appear to have the support of their superior officers. Lack of trust and blinkered instruction, tailored to suit the targets of the organisation appeared to feature in this. Also mixed messages about the importance of policy, its purpose and that, as a RO, it can be circumvented is indicative of poor leadership, leaving frontline officers unsure of boundaries and perpetuating feelings of fear or apprehension.

The final chapter of this research will analyse these findings further in a comparative discussion with the literature, which will seek to determine what influence these findings have in regard to the overall aim of the research; how or if EI features in decision-making when dealing with DV incidents.

# Discussion

Following the findings of a pilot study undertaken in 2016 (Eason, 2016) the purpose of this research was to explore how or if, EI is a factor in police decision-making when attending DV incidents, the impact it may have in terms of risk assessment and long-term victim protection, and any value perceived in its development with individual officers. There were three main objectives to support this exploration;

- 1) How do you respond to your 'gut feeling' when attending a domestic violence incident?
- 2) How does this influence your decision-making within the framework of the positive action strategy?
- 3) Why might developing your emotional intelligence support your understanding of and ability to assess domestic violence incidents more effectively?

These questions directed the focus and structure of the study and the design of the interviews with the participants. As detailed in chapters, three to six, four central themes emerged from the responses of the participants.

1. Gut instinct and "spidey sense" – the participants understanding of EI, its application in police practice and whether it could or should be something officers can develop.
2. "I've got it but he hasn't" - participant's perceptions of their own and others' EI competences and the contributory factors; age, self-confidence and experience.

3. “The voice in my ear” - an account of the difficulties faced through austerity, staff shortages and workload pressure, against a backdrop of cultural understandings and organisational targets for DV.
4. Working in a blame culture – evidences the cultural atmosphere of policing and accountability. Having to work to policy frameworks despite other information or tacit knowledge and the reluctance to challenge the hierarchy for fear of blame,

Within these, two critical factors thread within the findings and which support the creation and design of a new EI competence;

- *The diminishment of EI through job experience.*
- *Reluctance to follow gut instinct (EI) due to a blame culture surrounding autonomous decision-making.*

This final chapter will take the form of a comparative discussion, critically analysing findings against the literature that reveal a new EI competence, vital to intelligent and effective police practice when making decisions at DV incidents but also in dealing with other types of serious crime.

Almost all the participants related to the notion of gut feeling and were able to associate it with the Goleman (1998b) competency framework when presented. Although they referred to EI in many different ways (gut feeling or gut instinct, “spidey sense” or seventh sense, professional curiosity) most participants were able to identify with specific competences set out in Goleman’s framework and talk about how it influences their practice.

The two most popular competences identified were self-regulation (or self-control, managing emotions) and empathy. The former is a personal competence and is characterised by Goleman (1998b, p. 26) as “managing one’s internal states, impulses, and resources” and empathy, a social competence, “awareness of others’ feelings, needs, and concerns” (1998b, p. 27). When defining EI, several participants referred to being able to manage their own emotions but also recognised the importance of understanding and managing the emotions of others. As Saville (2006) points out, self-regulation is a necessary trait for good police work and most participants felt they were able to do this, even when attending the more stressful incidents.

This was also evident in terms of managing emotions towards their colleagues. Several participants suggested some of their peers did not apply self-regulation. For example, IP009 reported that at time of stress or conflict, particularly physical threat, they had observed their colleague “either losing their temper or becoming so much tunnel vision, that they’re not effective...” The impact of this IP009 stated, was the officer “shutting down” and becoming unproductive. This supports Gardner’s (1983) proposition that underdeveloped EI reduces success and productivity but also that it reduces the effectiveness of police work (Saville, 2006).

Goleman (1998b, p. 76) suggests that stress is inevitable part of life, both at work and in private and preoccupation with “emotionally driven thoughts” leaves little capacity in our working memory to problem solve efficiently, thus we regress to the impulsive ‘fight or flight’ mode. The cost of impulsivity, however, hampers our ability to adapt to our situations and “self-control is crucial in law enforcement” (1998b, p.

87) where encounters can quickly escalate to violence. It can also impair thinking and attending domestic incidents of the same couples or for the same reasons, can evoke strong feelings that cause lethargy, condescendence; “they lose interest...they’re just....what do you want to do today?” (IP004 page 136). This is synonymous with the idea of EI diminishing through longer time served and thus, more DV incidents attended, resulting in officers no longer able or perhaps willing to employ EI as it appears a wasted effort (Dando & Oxburgh’s, 2015, p.32).

Goleman (1998b) says that reducing stress or impulsivity is achievable through the intentional elicitation of a calm, emotional state. Sometimes utilising an unpleasant emotion such as fear or anger, to deal with the presented problem can assist with this. Taking deep breaths to reduce stress induced by anger, for example. Apart from using strong emotions to apply calming techniques, there are other possible constructive outcomes. For example, the feeling of sadness associated with bereavement can lead to fund-raising or social campaign. This type of positive energy manifests into creative thinking, or motivation. The loss of temper and tunnel vision reported by IP009 and TP002 indicates neither of these techniques were used in what they had had observed from their fellow officer. However it is not known, whether this was a developmental issue or a matter of choice. It does reinforce the idea of diminishing levels of EI and therefore implies that self-regulation of emotions at DV incidents is not practiced by all officers. This is, in turn, comparable to the implications of poor practice by the IPCC

([www.ipcc.gov.uk/investigations\\_and\\_reports](http://www.ipcc.gov.uk/investigations_and_reports)) and the National PEEL reports (<https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/peel-assessments/national-peel-reports/>).



IP008 referred to empathy as their definition of EI. Others understood it in broader terms, particularly in communicating with the victim. Communication is noted as a social competence by Goleman (1998, p.27), actively listening, receptiveness and attuning to the emotional cues of others. Empathy was also highlighted as one of the motivating factors to pursuing further enquiry. Participants reported how their ability to consider situations and circumstances from other people's perspectives, particularly DV victims, often led to disclosure and a different decision in how to proceed as well as assessment of the risks.

This positive impact of empathy on social and professional interactions is widely recognised (College of Policing, 2017a; Daus & Ashkanasy, 2005; Saville, 2006) and investigative empathy is being further explored with different types of crime offenders (Dando & Oxburgh, 2015; Oxburgh et al, 2015). These findings provide evidence that support this research and the idea of empathy being a crucial to effective investigation. When attending a DV incident, the use of empathy could potentially steer an officer into another direction, to investigate activity not observed or apparent at incident, but which could subsequently prevent further serious harm. However, Dando and Oxburgh's research, a qualitative study of officers interviewing suspected sex offenders, showed that officers often ignored or terminated empathic opportunities, the opportunity to use empathy as a means of gaining further disclosure. They suggest this is due to empathic behaviour requiring effort "it is an effortful type of sociality that supports the development of dispositions and actions" (2015, p.32). However, they also reported that there are negative connotations to being overly empathic with sexual offenders and the interview process is particularly onerous. Whilst the focus of the research was on a specific and stigmatised cohort

of offenders, it concluded that a lack of training was the noteworthy factor in police officer's reluctance to draw on and continue in the use of empathy. This is particularly significant as despite "considerable advancements in interview training for police officers in the UK the last 20 years" (2015, p.28), empathy is not an integral element.

This reflects the discovery in the Achieving Best Evidence guidance (Ministry of Justice, 2011, p.188) where the concept of empathy featured in just one subsection focused on building rapport and engagement of the witness. It is also reflective of what the majority of the participants in this research reported in interview; they had not received any substantial training in EI or reference to how it could assist in policing practice such as interviewing. This is paradoxically significant when the overarching professional body of the police, the College of Policing, suggests empathy as an effective tool in the investigative process of police work but does not offer any continued development. It is also significant given the evidence from participants in this research, who suggest that following their gut instinct, often reveals information pertinent to the risk posed by the offender and the use of empathy is pertinent to the further disclosure of this information by the victim.

The findings suggest that most participants do respond to their gut instinct, their EI. Triggered by emotions such as suspicion and physical indicators such as fluttering or butterflies, participants clearly indicated that it often led to a more thorough investigation of what was not observable, rather than what was. There was also a clear link between self-regulation of emotions and the use of empathy in the

pursuance of investigatory policing and that this led to better protection of the victims.

An interesting perspective put forward by two of the participants is the idea of “spidey sense”, which is described as the ability to feel and observe the whole environment. Not just the verbal exchange from the offender, victim or witnesses but embracing the whole environment and its contribution to the presentation of the victim and offender, and what they may or may not be saying. Tantamount to the naturalistic approach taken in this research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) “spidey sense” symbolises the participant’s collective understanding of EI as part of the whole environment. It is expressed in many different ways; gut instinct, hunch, intuition, not just the emotional vibes and verbal interactions but the physical, tangible triggers in themselves and observed in other actors at the incident, such as trembling, crying, pacing and physical evidence such as broken furniture, smashed windows. Collectively, these symbols trigger the officer to re-evaluate what they are being told, and explore other avenues of enquiry. EI in this form is not the competences that Goleman (1998) describes but an additional competence that facilitates the application of those competences in relation to the surroundings at an incident. A competence that determines how we can challenge and understand that environment but that is dependent on cultural understandings and procedural governance.

Police culture is symbolised as the collective attitudes and understandings of this cohesive group of professionals, a significant proportion of whom, consider attending DV incidents pointless (Reiner, 2010). The use of professional discretion at these incidents is steered through managerial restrictions and decisions about DV are

particularly sterile (Curtis & Bowlett, 2014) in a culture of following policy regardless. Of the four predominant themes, two centre on culture. "I've got it but he hasn't" suggests a collective belief that EI is not a consistent feature in police decision-making and 'working in a blame culture' highlights fearfulness of using EI motivated professional discretion within police work. This ambiguity in cultural practices is discussed further in particular reference, to understanding and challenging the DV incident environment.

In theme two, "I've got it but he hasn't", most participants expressed how life and job experience contributed immensely to the overall level of EI that an officer possessed. The overwhelming perception of age was that those younger, inexperienced officers had a lower level of EI than the longer-serving, older officers did. All however did not share this perception. Some suggested that many, new younger officers utilised their EI at DV incidents well, because they were not marred by the very experience some longer-serving officers suggested contributed to the development of EI. Thus, although keen to apply EI at the beginning of their careers, rather than developing through job experience, their EI diminishes. The experience of dealing, particularly with repeat victims who often do not want to prosecute, withdraw their statements, rekindle relationships with their abusers or minimise the abuse, grinds down their optimism and leads to cynicism, which impacts on their willingness and/or ability to employ EI. The more traditional, cultural meanings associated with DV victims and perpetrators is thus, internalised the longer and more experienced the officer becomes, using the symbolic cues of their more experienced peers and applying behaviours they believe are expected (Stryker, 1980). It is just such cultural

perpetuation the PEEL Report (HMIC, 2015) aims to challenge and the impact on practice is a less intuitive interaction with the DV environment.

The second sits within the fourth theme, 'Working in a blame culture' in which it is evident that a lack of clarity around policy and its interpretation, feeds into a cultural feeling of blame. Not only did the participant's verbal responses suggest concern and apprehension about adhering to policy in certain DV circumstances, but also their behaviour. Asking if anyone could hear his or her voice in interview or suspicion around anonymity, for example. Moreover, RO responses reinforced this fear of blame. There appeared a lack of trust in officers to make accurate risk assessments or decisions, trusting only in a blanket policy regardless of outcomes and regardless they have the power to circumvent the policy, at their discretion. In doing so, officers appeared to be constantly aware of self-accountability, feeling open to accusation and criticism so making decisions at DV incidents based on policy rather than victim or environmental observations. It is this environmental awareness that forms the basis of a proposed additional competence to Goleman's (1998) model.

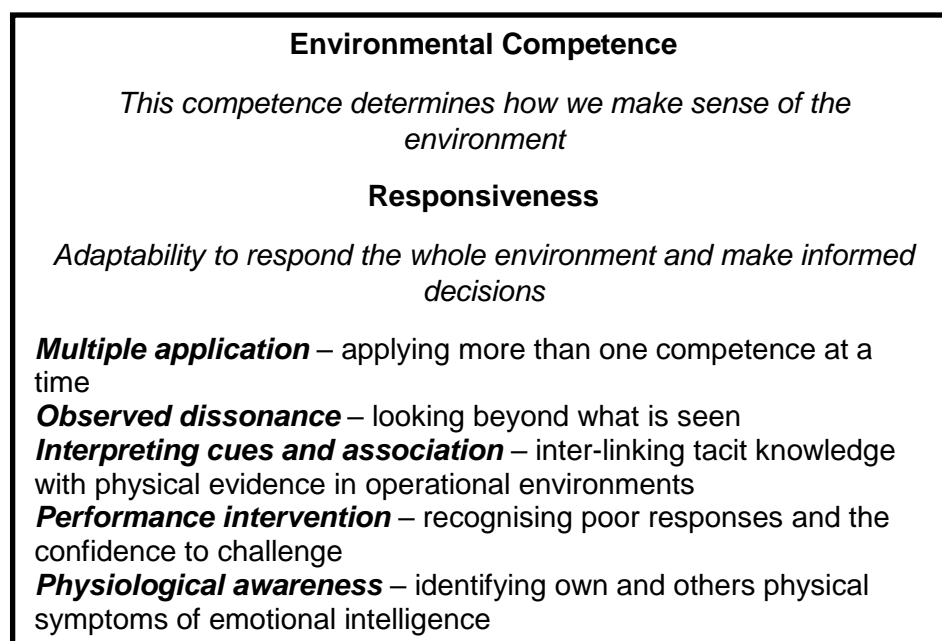
### **A new EI competence**

The proposed new competence builds upon the active responses of the officers and their application of those outlined by Goleman (1998b), in conjunction with other physiological and spatial awareness based on tacit knowledge and instinct.

*Environmental competence* is how we make sense of our surroundings, looking beyond the surface and sensing what lies beneath to provide three-dimensional context. However, unlike the workplace in which Goleman and others have based their work as a vital element of leadership, this competence adapts to the

changeable environment of each “job”, on a daily, often hourly basis, that the officer encounters. The environment, rather than the office, position or status of the individual, is the locational context of the incident which in terms of DV, is often the home of the victim, although not exclusively. Intrinsically linked to the response of the officer, *environmental competence* can have far-reaching consequences to victim safety. It informs the decision-making that may, or may not, have a positive impact, on the reduction of harm to the victim in the short or long-term. A butterfly effect. To explain this competence in more detail, it is has set out in line with the Goleman model (see figure 3) and broken down into the following adaptabilities; multiple application, observed dissonance, interpreting cues and association, performance intervention and physiological awareness, which are discussed in more detail below.

**Figure 3. Environmental Competence**



## Multiple Application

We have explored the benefits of both personal and social competence as outlined in Goleman's (1998b) framework and some of these, such as empathy and self-regulation are highlighted by the participants', as important to police work. Multiple application is the adaptability to employ more than one of these at any one time or link them in such a way as to use them more effectively. For example, some officers were able to demonstrate how empathy was a useful tool in gaining the trust of a victim. Most importantly however, was how the application of self-regulation helped to maintain empathy, interlinked in their application when strong emotions of frustration or even anger were present and/or symbolic meanings about DV offenders or victims may have interfered with interactions.

Likewise, building rapport, active listening and other communication skills form a structured process in enquiry and decision-making, adapting to the needs of the victim and management the environment. For instance, awareness of one's own emotion such as frustration, associated with the cultural and symbolic understanding of the DV victim and self-regulating behavioural responses to it whilst maintaining empathic interactions. Interactions, which could lead to disclosure that upon further investigation, reveals a much more harmful situation than is initially perceived. DV is a hidden crime of significant proportion (Davies, et al, 2007; Hoyle, 2007) and unpredictably high risk ([www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)) so adaptation to each distinctive incident using a range of competences is a valuable asset. Multiple application is the innate and seamless engagement in adaptation that link competences in action, so that more informed and responsive decisions are made.

## **Observed Dissonance**

Observed dissonance is a disparity or tension between what is 'seen' and feelings linked to what is not 'seen', hidden from sight. Linked to the idea of practical wisdom (Eraut, 1994) or "spidey sense", observed dissonance in the context of policing DV, is the disparity or tension between an officers feelings about an incident environment and what is 'seen' (presented) to them; the elements of DV that render it an invisible crime (Davies et al, 2014). This dissonance, triggered by an officer's EI, serves to increase curiosity beyond the palpability of the incident.

The police officer's working environment changes from day to day, job to job, crime to crime and 'things not being what they seem' is a vital component in DV, to pursuing a more tailored line of inquiry according to each unique incident. Adapting to this uniqueness is a valuable tool through which an officer has to be able to assess firstly, the individuality of the couple but also their unique physical, social and spatial environment. This includes physiological and psychological awareness and how it leads the officer to respond, can have a longer term impact on the domestic situation; identifying risk factors outside of the rhetoric, exploring the physical environment, identifying others emotions and conflicts between what is spoken, what can be seen and body language. Whatever the resulting decision, the implementation of the positive action policy, child protection or other immediate safeguarding issues, are impacted on through the 'on the job' evaluation of the observed versus the invisible.

The difficulties arising from this tension or disparity however appear exasperated by the policies intended to guide and protect. Not making an arrest or probing deeper to



gain a better understanding, may escalate a situation and is difficult to justify when based upon feelings than hard evidence. Despite the autonomy of professional discretion advocated by the Home Secretary Theresa May (2011) and the subsequent array of decision-making tools made available to the police, the participants indicated a continued intolerance for individual leadership in the field. Rather than affording them the discretion to interact and respond to any observed dissonance, they feel bound to policy and ranked oversight, much as described by Sanders-McDonagh and Neville (2017). Nevertheless, for this element of the environmental competence to be successful, confidence in an officer's performance and ability to adapt to the unseen aspect of DV is required.

### **Interpreting Cues and Association**

How the individual and collective symbolic meanings of words and actions are understood, has been critically discussed (Reiner, 2010; van Hulst, 2013). This includes the way in which legislation and policy can be interpreted and implemented, with the challenge of interrater-reliability (Canton, 2011) despite standardised training and other types of input (written guidance for example). Understanding a cue when in attendance at a DV incident is the ability to link tacit knowledge, to the physical signs of the environment. These can be a closed door, the silence of children, a clenched fist or self-blame of the victim but it is their inter-connected relationship with the emotional vibes and/or presentation of the offender and victim that can alert the police officer to taking a different response. This may be to gather more evidence as to the nature of the incident but moreover, associating the extent to which DV is a part of normal life within the relationship, an issue that inevitably involves the wider family.

The officer needs to be able to decipher biased tacit understandings from true, meaningful knowledge that will support them adapting to these interlinked yet unscripted cues effectively and respond to them appropriately. Dispel the myths.

Being able to link physical signs to how you interact with someone can support the associating of these cues. For instance, a DV offender may tell an officer that he is not angry anymore and if they go, he will not cause any further harm. However, the physical signs of the environment indicate otherwise. This is not just the obvious signs such as broken furniture or holes in doors but more subtle physical signs that can be overlooked. Furniture indentations in the carpet indicating furniture has been moved to cover something up or the smell of fresh bleach at 2.00 am suggesting something has been recently cleaned. Linking these physical and 'out of place' signs encourages either a different understanding of the situation or at least different questions being asked. This is only possible by the attending officer, the person who can actually see the physical signs and make those associations. *Interpreting cues and association* thus promotes the idea of adaptive professional discretion.

This may mean challenging formal guidance and to do this they would need the support of the RO and be trusted to make autonomous decisions; reinvigorating street level bureaucracy (Lipsky, 1980).

## **Performance Intervention**

Many of the participants of the research spoke about the poor practice of colleagues who they felt had a low-level EI. They reported how this resulted in poorly managed situations and potentially unnecessary action or indeed, a neglect to act.

Performance intervention is the confidence to take action at the time poor practice

occurs. A willingness to challenge and adapt to the possible repercussions of contestation. For example, when an officer is dismissive of the DV victim due to feelings of frustration at her cyclical victimisation, it is the confidence to interject without undermining the officer or upsetting the victim further. Applying elements of Goleman's (1998a) social competence, such as communication, conflict management and collaboration and cooperation in the act of intervening can promote either revised performance or performer, to gain the best outcome. In this example, nurturing the relationship with the victim that may lead to her long-term safety by encouraging the poor performing officer, to take a different view or distracting them with another task. Taking the lead.

Of course, challenging colleagues is difficult. It can be isolating, cause resentment and spur other negative emotions that can be destructive in professional relationships, particularly if the challenge is not supported by other colleagues or management, as found by Berry (2009). As this research has found, not all officers believe that EI is a necessary or helpful tool and as it diminishes over time, challenges are less likely to be accepted, or instigated. Indeed, it may be that the new recruits who are reportedly much more emotionally aware are most likely to challenge and the officer who lacks in EI, the one who has been in the job longest. This could cause a subcultural rift as the new recruit attempts to integrate with their contemporary knowledge and skills set into a cop culture symbolised by masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; van Hulst 2013) seemingly worn down with negative experiences of policing DV (IP004 and IP006 on page 142). Nevertheless, to 'read' and work adaptively within the DV environment, intervention is necessary in

these situations if they are to be effectively resolved and could make a positive difference to the victim.

Challenging policy and legislation is not something participants felt able to do unless the force becomes more of a learning environment. Challenge needs to be an acceptable element. Self-confidence is a key factor of this and can only be developed with the support of management and a cultural shift in the force and its political governance. Challenging, when standing in the incident environment presents with further problems. Problems of risk management, rapport building including trust and confidence of the police by the victim, authority of the officer to the offender but perhaps most importantly the whole symbolic meaning of the police in terms of how they deal with DV and with DV victims and feelings of safety.

Participants reported feeling restricted in making lead decisions at domestic incidents, by their RO, by policy. Questioning policy was undermined, yet blame was forthcoming should further harm be caused to the victim. They also voiced that arrest was not, always, the best course of action but felt unable to question decisions made by RO's despite their absence from the scene. This was attributed to this blame culture that reportedly encompasses the force and is driven by political agenda and media reporting. Empowering officers through a process that encourages questioning and solution finding that supports them in applying EI in decision-making in a way they believe, as the lead, to be the most impactful, is what performance intervention seeks to contribute.

## **Physiological Awareness**

Having a more developed EI assists in understanding the physiological, tangible symptoms of emotion, which are at times, more apparent than the rhetorical account given. Attributing accurate meanings is however, a more complex skill as we have seen from the literature. Crying might be through sadness, anger, frustration, pain and only by understanding the environmental context can we make sense of the physiological symptom. Being aware of this complexity is therefore essential in 'reading' the situation and making the most appropriate decisions. This is not, however confined to the offender and victim but also witnesses, including children, other family members and of course, colleagues.

The impact of police work on emotional well-being, can often be overlooked and attending multiple incidents of DV can also have an impact on colleagues in a variety of ways. Physiological symptoms may be masking deep emotional trauma in self and/or others. This can in turn, impact on the response to, or interaction with, the offender/victim. Being in tune with these symptoms and their contra-indications, supports the officer's ability to work more effectively in the environment they are presented with. Adapting the approach taken with the actors, removing them from the immediate risks, signposting to specialist support, debriefing, performance intervention are all ways of managing the complexities of the DV environment more effectively, during and after an incident. Responding appropriately to the physiological symptoms of self and others is part of a holistic approach. The environment competence acknowledges physiological symptoms as triggers to EI but also as a symptom or precursor to longer-term issues for all involved.

This additional competence is not suggested to replace the framework offered by Goleman (1998b) but rather to compliment it, providing a competence that supports police officers in the application of EI in domestic incidents. A competence specifically designed to understand how EI can be applied in the different environments police officers operate in. Not an office, retail outlet or lecture hall, but most often, the personal domain of the DV victim, as unique to them as their experience of victimhood and the complexities the crime of DV brings.

# Conclusion

This research evolved from a pilot study (Eason, 2016) in which the participants highlighted EI as a valuable tool when working with DV victims. The idea that police officers acknowledged EI as a skill they used surprised me, given the masculine and stoic presentation of those in the service (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). How they explained EI was applied inferred different ways of decision-making, much more focused on the needs of the victim than organisational policy expectations. This was an unexpected outcome and, because it was something the participants themselves had identified, felt worthy of pursuit. This was considered particularly so at point of domestic incident, as decisions at this time have the potential for long-term outcomes for the victim; a domino effect similar to the notion in chaos theory (Ayers, 1997).

The literature review explores chaos theory and its interconnectedness with symbols and emotions and how these drive decision-making through both individual subconscious beliefs and more conscious, collective and subcultural understandings. Through the theoretical approach of SI (Hewlett and Schulman, 2011) it explores the concept of individual truth and how this impacts on how we interact with others. EI emphasises the importance of emotional awareness and responses and is discussed in terms of a leadership skill (Goleman, 1998a; Salovey & Mayer, 1990) but rather than the confines of managers as leaders as set out by its authors, this research considers frontline police officers as leaders, how they, as response officers, must take the lead at scenes of DV incidents. Their working environment is changeable, dependent on the location of the incident rather than the traditional white-collar

office. Thus, the competences defined by Goleman's (1998b) model are applied to the role of the officers in their unique environments and its value, assessed through their unique responses.

EI is explained by Goleman (1998a) as a series of personal and social competences that characterise how a person's responses can impact on those around them and if developed appropriately, can have a positive effect. They can stimulate a range of actions that motivate empowerment, disclosure, self-awareness, empathy amongst others and all of which are beneficial to engaging the DV victim at a time they are most vulnerable. Constructive interactions are symbolic of the support and justice the victims and wider public expect, producing collective understandings that the police are there to protect those who are vulnerable, without judgement or preconception. This has not however, been the message projected through government reports (HMIC, 2015; HMICFRS, 2017; IPCC, 2011/2014) or the media and public confidence in the police is always an upward struggle.

One such misunderstanding is around the concept of police culture which is commonly criticised and reported in such a way to create a divide between public and police (Loftus, 2012). The challenges faced by police officers on a daily basis is the foundation to police culture, collective experience and understandings of society that only they can truly understand. This is exemplified by IP005 for example, when they talk about dealing with male DV perpetrators who "wont have a problem being abusive" (IP005, p.167). Much like the DV victims' collective understanding of their repeat victimisation, so the police experience a similar cultural bond. These are



however, at polar opposites where the symbolism of police to victims could be one of victim blame or state interference that increases the chances of further violence and to the police officer, a 'job' that requires a lot of work with little, or no positive outcome (Rowe, 2007). The blame culture that exists within that foundation is clearly a powerful influence that defeats the use of EI due to political and policy constraints of accountability (Berry, 2009).

Since the start of the millennium, there has been a growing focus on the way in which the police have operated that has been negatively exacerbated with reports that openly criticise processes and operational decisions that have resulted in public and private tragedy. The endless stream of IPCC investigations ([www.ipcc.gov.uk](http://www.ipcc.gov.uk)) into DV incidents that have taken lives continues to grow, as the police force struggles to accommodate increasing numbers of domestic incidents with fewer resources. However, it is important to recognise that austerity is only one factor in the difficulties faced in policing DV incidents. Unsatisfactory legislation, blanket policy and the perpetuation of cultural attitudes towards DV appear to hinder the more effective ways of dealing with these crimes and their victims. This attitude is not just from frontline officers but a cultural attitude that from within the higher ranks, the public and indeed, from within politics itself evident in the PEEL reports (HMIC, 2015; HMICFRS, 2017) that highlight the same problems each year in tackling domestic abuse.

Still without its own identification as a criminal offence, DV remains a crime that falls within many different offence categories. It has a broad definition that is complex and

often difficult to pinpoint and prosecute; how do you identify and evidence coercion, marital rape, emotional abuse or even physical assault when the victim, proficient at hiding her abuse, is emotionally intertwined with her assailant, frightened of reprisal and socially and economically disempowered? Only this morning I was talking to my daughter, a single mother of three, about her own financial hardship trying to go to work and pay excessive nursery fees only to be penalised by the decrease in one benefit resulting in a shortfall from the increase in another. For a mother who is experiencing violence, the financial burden of becoming a single parent is often one of the primary influences for her decision to remain in the relationship (Craven, 2008).

It is these complexities and the frustration of repeat victimisation that often hinders the development of more informed cultural attitudes. SI (Ayers, 1997) suggests how we view the world is unique, our reality made up of individual interpretations alongside collective understandings aligned to groups we identify with (Reiner, 2010; van Hulst, 2013). The symbolism of policing is culturally understood by those within it through internal subcultural practices of debriefing, storytelling and shared experience and by those outside, by observed practices. The same can be asserted in terms of the DV victim, where their reality is symbolised by the abusive partner, that look or gesture that signifies what is to come (Craven, 2008; Hoyle, 2007).

Likewise, their remaining in the relationship is often misunderstood by those outside whose interpretation of their repeat victimisation is marred by a lack of conceptual insight and EI that forms empathic and empowering relationships. This is

perpetuated through media and governmental scrutiny that has created a blame culture based on police accountability (Berry, 2009; The Police Foundation, 2018) and DV victim stereotypes, so intensely embedded within the organisation and public thinking that in the conducting of the research, participants were not only vociferous about how impactful it is but articulated the difficulties it poses operationally. For example, the idea of “them upstairs breathing down your neck” (IP009, p.165) IP009 suggests forces officers to ignore what they assess would be beneficial to the victim. Or having to follow blanket policy because “the HMIC thinking is that, if you arrest people then less people report domestic violence, there must be less domestic violence” (AP006, p.160) disregarding any indicative information that can explain patterns in the reporting and recording DV incidents. SI provides us with a theoretical platform in which we can begin to unpick those stereotypical meanings that can be prejudicial to practice, that exhaust emotions and the motivation to operate at a level in which serving police officers can make a difference to long-term victim protection, rather than ‘firefight’ each crisis with little or no effect.

Achieving cultural change takes time and enthusiasm and possibly the change in new officer training could be the start of this. Indeed, IP006 reported that they felt there are already signs of a change in attitudes about DV from 10 years previously when officers would attend and tell the couple to “sort it out yourself” (IP006, p. 163). The professionalisation of the police promoted by the College of Policing (2017) offers new recruits the opportunity not only to learn more about domestic violence, victims and effective ways of working but the development of EI and its application in everyday practice including DV. Moreover, this has also created a movement for current officers who do not have an undergraduate degree to engage in academic

learning through 'top-up' courses and level 7 provisions that specialise in offences like DV. Academia creates a safe learning environment for improved critical thinking, reflection and the ability to develop and restore EI that may have diminished through service that can improve and sustain positive cultural change.

It would also support the challenging of blanket policy that also appears to impede practice, often proving impractical and inflexible at times when a bespoke approach is required. Such policies stifle the decision-making powers of the officer, despite their training in decision-making and other, accountability processes. Theresa May advocated the autonomous officer in her speech in (2011) yet the underlying trend of fear and blame circumvents this with a clear ranked decision-making process regardless of who has the most knowledge of the situation. This research argues the officer at the scene not the RO in the control room should take the lead and that by using their EI, they can make a more informed decision. This may not be in line with policy but their tacit knowledge about the victim/offender relationship, the presenting risks and hidden threats informed by their EI should be trusted as part of their autonomous practice. If officers are intelligently selected and properly trained and are responsible for their decision-making, then accountability should not be an obstacle for use of EI and individualised decision-making.

It is the criticisms of the IPCC (IOPC) and media scrutiny which harvest such apprehension that accountability remains the priority of the service (Fielding, 2018) and the push for decisions to be justified against a set of policy and practice guidelines that are not necessarily fit for purpose and do not involve any type of

discretion. An example given is the application of positive arrest that has been evaluated by Sherman and Harris (2015) in the MiLDVE, a practice that is proving fatal for a particularly vulnerable cohort of DV victims and which supports the previous work of Hoyle (2007). This reaffirms the need for discretion at an individual level but poses a legitimate problem for the officer who may bend the boundaries of policy guidance, particularly in terms of accountability that challenges the collective stereotype of what DV is and who DV victims are.

Understanding issues such as this is therefore essential, if police officers are to successfully apply EI, in their interactions with DV victims. Dispelling the symbolic and stereotypical meanings attached to female victims of DV and the inevitable result of “single mum” should she decide to leave, can be achieved through academic learning, the route through which the College of Policing (2017) is spearheading the professionalisation of the police. What this research sought to find out was whether EI is, should and/or could be a useful tool in the policing of domestic incidents and if it is, or can be, then how could this be developed at an individual and cultural level. After all, developing skills at individual level is lost if cultural attitudes within the organisation remain unchanged (Thompson, 2016).

This is a unique study, undertaken from the perspective of an experienced probation officer and relatively new academic, about the operation of another public sector organisation, the police, who is part of that wider, multi-disciplinary team that approaches the complexities of DV holistically. What this research has clearly shown is not only does EI feature in some officer’s practice but most agree that it is useful

and welcome some form of development training. Although not all were able to identify EI traits in the terms set out by Goleman (1998b), once shown the framework they were able to recognise particular competencies in themselves and others. They were also vociferous in being able to identify how a lack of competency in others hindered them operationally, giving examples of poor practice as evidence of both their understanding of EI and how they thought it should be implemented. This culminated into the formulation of a new 'environmental competence', not to replace Goleman's (1998b) framework, but to compliment it as an addition bespoke to the work of police officers and perhaps even the wider work of criminal justice professionals who operate within the DV field.

As with Rowe's (2007) research, some of participants in this research did not wish nor thought it was their place to challenge policy, superiors or the cultural attitudes of colleagues but if the police force is to become a learning organisation, then the freedom to challenge and take leadership on decision-making needs to be encouraged. This includes the decision to follow 'gut instinct' or 'professional curiosity' and work with victims of DV with empathy, informed interactions and accurate risk assessments that will have a long-term impact on securing their protection. Incorporating 'environmental competence' into their framework of skills, it is proposed, will inevitably affect the experience of the victim and their willingness to engage in taking protective steps. The ability to read the environment holistically, looking beyond what is presented at the incident and making physiological and emotional links will enhance tacit understandings and dispel symbolic stereotyping so the officer feels more able to question and respond more effectively. It will also motivate the victim to engage more fully, understanding their position is

acknowledged and accepting the type of support necessary to help them move away from their abuser into a safer and protected lifestyle.

This additional competence and more general suggestion of using EI in decision-making does not suggest that it will eradicate the long-term suffering or fatalities of DV victims but what it does suggest, is that it can support officers in making more effective decisions, that may challenge current policy and cultural thinking. This is especially important as austerity continues to cut in to the presence of officers, reducing availability and continuity in tackling DV and where blanket decision-making appears to heighten the risk of further violence.

The research did not reach its second phase of a questionnaire sent out to all officers across England and this would likely be the next step in the research phase; a questionnaire informed by the responses of the interviewees sent out to all officers, anticipated to support the current findings. A pilot study of evaluating officer's performance who have engaged in some form of EI training the new competence, against a control group who have not, would also prove useful. RCT is a recognised and popular methodological approach in police research (Scantlebury et al, 2017) and would allow for a comparison to be drawn. This would almost certainly support the significance of the research and its contribution to policing practice and the notion of frontline officers as leaders. As John C. Maxwell said "Leadership is not about titles, positions or flowcharts. It is about one life influencing another" dismissing the symbolism of rank, policy and protocol, all integral elements of policing practice and culture. This research supports this innate quality of the

individual, the police officer's emotional connection with the victim and their environment that enhances their ability to make confident and informed decisions; impacting on the long-term protection of the victim as the butterfly does the wind.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the analysis of the findings, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Design and deliver training in EI development with specific focus on environmental competence to support officers in following their professional curiosity and utilising professional discretion. This would likely take the shape of face-to-face teaching/training. For those in the new recruitment process, it could be included in their higher education curriculum. For those already in force or continued professional development, in-house workshops appear the most popular route.
2. Encourage EI development by promoting its significance in the College of Policing curriculum for the recruitment of new constables. This could be achieved in the regional College of Policing curriculum review meetings held with those who provide the PCDA or other entry higher education routes. Publishing the findings in appropriate journals, such as the Cambridge Journal can also raise awareness of the new competence and the benefits.
3. Ensure all officers have criminological input that focuses on understanding the DV victim(s) and offending and the obstacles in tackling it from within the relationship. As well as specific training, cultural change in regard to how DV is viewed is vital if long lasting change can be made and any new emotional



intelligence competence, implemented. This has to originate from not only senior management, policy and guidance but from the management structure within, encouraging frontline officers to work empathically but also using environmental knowledge intelligently.

These recommendations reflect the learning from the research that support the development of EI, that will in-turn, support autonomous and bespoke decision-making at domestic incidents. This does not advocate that policies and procedures should not be adhered to as they are the legislative structure through which criminal justice work has to be conducted. What it would be is a welcome return of the 'street-level bureaucrat' that Lipsky (1980) recognised as essential to the uniqueness of the 'jobs' professionals attend and promote the positive symbolism of the police as proactive in their protecting DV victims. They will promote leadership in those frontline officers who deal with DV victims at time of crisis and offer a more effective and tailored response. Whilst this falls outside blanket policy, deeper insight into domestically related crime and the unique DV victim can justify this.

Our understanding of the DV interventions and measures we have been implementing for many years is gradually surfacing and as evidence-based practitioners, the new wave of police officers will appreciate the use of research and how EI can assist in its beneficial application. It is this professionalisation process that can encourage cultural change within the police service that may prove obstructive initially. As part of a toolkit of skills and knowledge, they will not only advertise the benefits of EI in policing practice, as identified by participants of both

this and previous research (Eason, 2016), but also propose to influence cultural thinking around EI and the use of emotions in police work. It would be remiss to assume that this will be easy or quick, but it will form part of an attitudinal change that will challenge potential obstacles to its acceptance and continued development.

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## **Appendix 1 – Interview Schedule**

### **Interview questions for ‘The ‘butterflies’ effect: Emotional Intelligence, Domestic Violence and Police Decision-making**

Thank you for taking the time to come and in and talk to me today. Firstly I wanted to reiterate that anything you say to me will remain confidential and the recorded transcription will be anonymised.

Before we start, I wanted to check that you fully understand what the research is about and secondly, that you understand that you can withdraw at any time during the interview or ask for any data collected to be withdrawn up until it has been transcribed. I also wanted to tell you that should any information you provide suggest you or anyone else is at risk of harm or that a criminal offence has occurred that I have a duty to terminate the interview and pass this information on to the authorities.

Lastly, do you have any further questions? If not, then please sign and date the consent form – I will ensure you receive a copy.

The interview is in three sections; Understanding EI, Managing Emotions and Development.

#### **Understanding EI**

1. What is your understanding of the concept ‘emotional intelligence’?
2. This is the Goleman Model (give copy to interviewee). Goleman suggests that possessing EI enables you to recognise your own feelings and those of others and in doing so, shapes the way in which you interact with each other. He suggests having a high EI means that you are more empathic, understand yourself, your goals, intentions, responses, behaviour and understand others and their feelings.
  - a. Can you think of anyone that has these competences?
  - b. Which can you recognise and how does it shape their behaviour?
  - c. Do you feel you possess any of these competences?
  - d. If yes, please explain which ones and why.
  - e. If no, why not?
3. In previous research, it has been suggested that having a ‘gut feeling’ is linked to emotional intelligence and the officer experienced specific emotions when this happened. Have you experienced this?
  - a. If you have, what emotions did you experience and how did you react to them?
  - b. Have you experienced it when at work?
  - c. Has this changed your thinking or behaviour at work and if it has, how?
4. When attending an incident of domestic violence have you acted on your ‘gut feeling’ when making risk assessment decisions? If yes, in what way?

- a. In terms of the Positive Action policy
- b. In completing the DASH risk assessment tool

## **Managing Emotions**

5. In previous research, it was suggested that when attending incidents of domestic violence often the officers had very strong feelings (anger, frustration, exasperation) and this could impact on their behaviour.
  - a. Have you ever had a strong feeling when attending a domestic violence incident?
  - b. If yes, has it impacted on how you have responded to the victim and/or offender?
  - c. How do you think it could impact on the victim and/or offender?
  - d. How could this impact on how you risk assess a domestic incident?
  
6. Do you think developing your emotional intelligence (self-regulation) can help you manage these feelings when making risk assessments at domestic violence incidents?
  - a. How might it help?
  - b. Do you think it is a positive or negative thing? Please explain

## **Development**

7. Imagine that you were proficient in all these competencies. How do you think it would help you make decisions differently when attending a domestic violence incident?
  
8. Do you think you or any of your colleagues would benefit from education/training that would help develop your/their emotional intelligence?
  - a. If yes, why do you think you would benefit in terms of policing domestic violence incidents?
  - b. How would you like this development to take place?
  - c. If no, why do you not think you would benefit?

Do you have any further comments you would like to make that you feel are relevant to this research?

Thank you very much for taking part today. Your responses are invaluable and I hope will not only help to inform my study but also future policing practice.

If you do have any questions after today please contact me on my email address provided or that of my supervisor Andy Williams who will be happy to discuss any issues with you.

**Anne Eason**

## **Appendix 2 – Email Invitation to Participants**

Dear Police Officer,

My name is Anne Eason and I am a Professional Doctorate in Criminal Justice student with the University of Portsmouth. Your organisation has agreed me approaching you to ask you to participate in the research for my Thesis that is focussing on decision-making at domestic violence incidents and the use of emotional intelligence. The research is being conducted in two parts the first of which is via individual interviews which will inform a later questionnaire. The interview will take no longer than 60 minutes and is an opportunity for you to contribute to the continuing development of policing domestic violence.

If you are a regular serving Police Officer who has attended at least one domestic violence incident and are interested in taking part, please email me at [up753560@myport.ac.uk](mailto:up753560@myport.ac.uk) . Your participation and all information from the interview will remain confidential – please see the Participant Information Form and Consent form attached.

Thanking you in anticipation.  
Anne

## Appendix 3 – Participant Information Form

### Participant Information Sheet

1<sup>st</sup> September 2016



Anne Eason – Researcher [UP753560@myport.ac.uk](mailto:UP753560@myport.ac.uk)  
Dr Andy Williams – Supervisor [andy.williams@port.ac.uk](mailto:andy.williams@port.ac.uk)  
University of Portsmouth, Winston Churchill Avenue  
Portsmouth  
PO1 2UP

**Study Title:** The ‘butterflies’ effect: Emotional Intelligence, Domestic Violence and Police Decision-making

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide I would like you to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Talk to others about the study if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear

#### **What is the purpose of the study?**

This study aims to explore how or if emotional intelligence forms part of a police officer's decision-making in risk assessment, when attending domestic violence incidents.

#### **Why have I been invited?**

You have received this invitation because you are a regular police officer who has attended one or more domestic violence incident and undertaken a risk assessment.

#### **Do I have to take part?**

No. It is hoped however, that you consider the interview as a way in which you can contribute to an area of police practice that is at the forefront of public protection. Participation is voluntary and thus, you can choose whether you wish to be interviewed or not. Once the interview is transcribed however, you will not be able to withdraw from the study as your data is anonymised and therefore untraceable.

#### **What will happen to me if I take part?**

You will take part as a in an informal interview which should last no longer than 60 minutes. The research objectives will be explained to you and prior to the interview commencing you will be asked to sign the consent form. The interview will be audio recorded and then uploaded and transcribed. The recording will be password protected and remain confidential.

#### **Expenses and payments**

There is no remuneration for your participation however refreshments will be provided.

**What will I have to do?**

The interview will take the form of a semi-structured interview where there are set questions that all participants will be asked. However, you are invited to speak freely about the topic and your contribution will be greatly valued.

**What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**

The possible disadvantage will be the time invested in undertaking interview. Another possible risk is the issue of identification which could have a professional impact however every effort will be made to ensure complete anonymity of all participants.

**What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

The benefit of participating would be the opportunity for you to contribute to research that may support the positive changes to practice and the victim experience.

**Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?**

All audio and paper sourced information will be stored securely according to the Data Protection Act 1998; audio transcripts and IT driven statistical analysis (NVivo) will be password protected and accessible only to the researcher and supervisor /assessor at the University of Portsmouth and any auditors (for the purpose of monitoring the quality of the research). Paper-based information will be stored in a locked cupboard. Any authorised person who can access the data will have a duty of confidentiality to you as a research participant and will do their best to adhere to their obligation to this. No direct quotations will be used to ensure there is no possibility of identification.

The data will be used for the pilot study but will also be retained for use in future studies where further REC approval will be sought, however, the confidentiality of the material will remain secured and anonymous and only authorised persons such as the researcher, supervisor and assessors (including auditors for monitoring the quality of the research) will have access. The data collected will remain the property of the University of Portsmouth and stored according to the Data Protection Act for a period of 10 years, Consent Forms for 30 years.

**What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?**

If, after the interview, you decide you do not wish the information given to be used, you need to notify the researcher of your decision to withdraw. Given the anonymity of the data collection process it may not be possible to withdraw once the interview has been transcribed and therefore not possible to identify and extract specific data after that point.

**What if there is a problem?**

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, please either speak to myself, Anne Eason, Researcher email [UP753560@myport.ac.uk](mailto:UP753560@myport.ac.uk) or my supervisor and Course Leader, Andy Williams email [andy.williams@port.ac.uk](mailto:andy.williams@port.ac.uk) telephone 023 9284 3067. We will do our best to answer any of your questions or concerns. I also wanted to tell you that should any information you provide suggest you or anyone else is at risk of harm or that a criminal offence has occurred that I have a duty to terminate the interview and pass this information on to the authorities.

**What will happen to the results of the research study?**



The findings will form part of the Thesis for my Professional Doctorate in Criminal Justice which will be assessed by the University of Portsmouth. At a later date, the findings may be presented for publication and key learning points shared to inform future practice.

### **Who is organising and funding the research?**

The research is being sponsored by the University of Portsmouth as part of the Professional Doctorate in Criminal Justice programme. Permission has been granted by Northants Police to access officers to participate in the research although they are neither funding nor will benefit financially from it. It is hoped however, they may benefit in relation to practice development and ensuring a positive victim experience.

### **Who has reviewed the study?**

Research in the University of Portsmouth is looked at by an independent group of people called an Ethics committee specifically to protect the interests of the participants and the validity of any findings from it. This study has been reviewed and was given a favourable opinion by the Ethics committee.

### **Further information and contact details**

The research aims to gather information from police officers (PC) about their decision making in specific reference to risk assessment at domestic violence incidents and the use of emotional intelligence. It is hoped that the outcomes from the project will assist in the design of further research into this area that will form the basis of the Professional Doctorate Thesis and support the continued development of police practice in regard to domestic violence.

With a 'positive action' policy that demands the police officer takes a proactive approach to incidents of domestic violence (ACPO, 2008)<sup>1</sup> the research aims to explore decision-making at an individual level in relation to risk assessment; the unique sources that the officer draws from that informs their decision-making process and their views of how this impacts on management of the situation. It also seeks their views whether or not emotional intelligence is a concept that could assist in their practice and the benefits of development. For further information please contact the researcher Anne Eason on [UP753560@myport.ac.uk](mailto:UP753560@myport.ac.uk) or 01905 542809.

Participation is voluntary and thus, those officers given the opportunity to participate can choose they choose to however, engagement does give them a 'voice' through which they can contribute to an area of police practice that is at the forefront of public protection.

The participation of the research does not pose any individual risk per se, however it is a sensitive issue and should participants be concerned about any emotional or psychological impact, they will be directed to the occupational health services of their organisation for support. There will also be a

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<sup>1</sup> ACPO (2008) Guidance on Investigating Domestic Abuse, London: NPJA

debriefing directly after the interview where you will have the opportunity to ask any questions and be provided with information in regard to support services should you require them.

**Concluding statement**

I would like to thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and consider participating in the research. If you do decide to participate your input will be greatly valued. You will be provided with a copy of this to keep and formal consent will be sought.

## Appendix 4 – Consent Form

### Consent Form

1<sup>st</sup> September 2016



Anne Eason – Researcher [UP753560@myport.ac.uk](mailto:UP753560@myport.ac.uk)  
Dr Andy Williams – Supervisor [andy.williams@port.ac.uk](mailto:andy.williams@port.ac.uk)

University of Portsmouth  
Winston Churchill Avenue  
Portsmouth  
PO1 2UP

**Study Title:** The 'butterflies' effect: Emotional Intelligence, Domestic Violence and Police Decision-making

**Name of Researcher:** .Anne Eason.....

**Please initial box**

- |    |  |                          |
|----|--|--------------------------|
| 1. | I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated 1 <sup>st</sup> September 2016 for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the Information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.                | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. | I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason. However, should this be after completion of the interview and its transcription, any information already gathered may still be used. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. | I understand that data collected during the study, may be looked at by individuals from the University of Portsmouth, or from regulatory authorities. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my data.                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. | I agree to being voice recorded during the interview.  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. | I agree to being quoted anonymously.   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. | I agree to the data I contribute being retained for future, REC approved research.   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. | I agree to take part in the above study.   | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Name of Participant:

Date:

Signature:

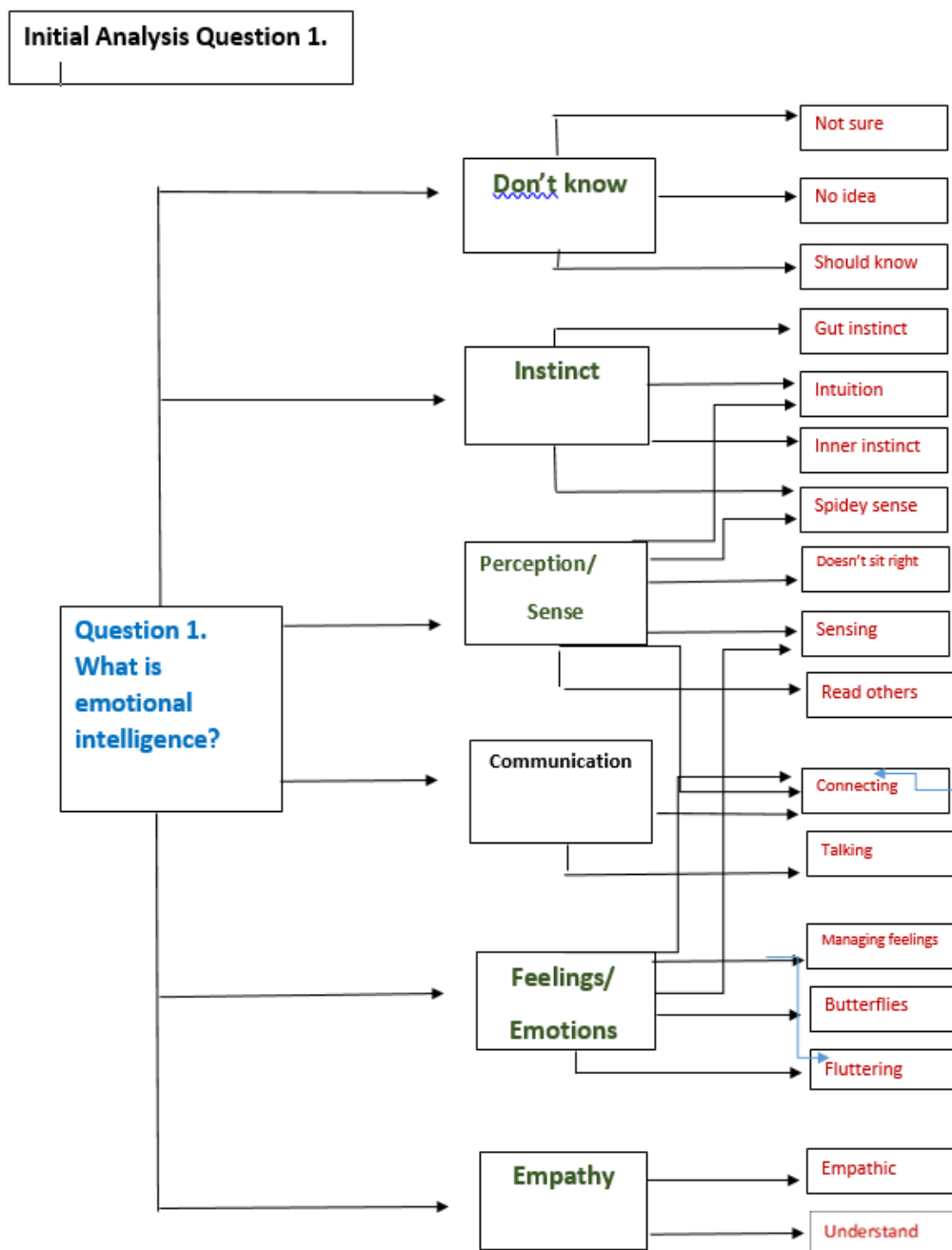
Name of person taking consent:

Date:

Signature:

When completed: 1 for participant; 1 for researcher's file;

## Appendix 5 - Coding



**Question 1. What is emotional intelligence? Component – Understanding. Theme: Gut Instinct and Spidey Sense.**

<b>Sense</b>	<b>Communication</b>	<b>Instinct</b>	<b>Feelings</b>	<b>Curiosity</b>	<b>Empathy</b>
AP001 It's like a perception you have without sort of really knowing	AP006 for me, it's generally just speaking to people, and seeing how I feel from what they're saying, and how they're reacting, what their body language is, things like that. That's generally what I look at.	TP014 its your inner instinct	AP008 it's like a feeling you have about something or someone like their or your perception of what they might not be telling you	AP009 Is it like what they call professional ...err... curiosity? I think that's it	IP008 I think you can sum it up in one word. Empathy
IP006 whether you're able to read other people's emotions.	IP009 Emotional intelligence, as I see it, is a person's ability to understand and manage their own intelligence and read and understand other people's intelligence, and communicate and work within those effectively, and how skilful they are at doing that	AP005 You mean like your gut instinct?	NP001 but I do look at stuff and I do, kind of, look and I think you are driven by your gut as well, because if you think, shit, this is dangerous, you get that butterfly scenario	IP007 it's called professional curiosity, its thinking outside the box, just thinking, is there anything else there?	IP009 Being empathic with the victims definitely
IP007 I don't know really....is it, it's like a seventh sense you get, like a spidey sense. Like, if you go somewhere and you think, I've got to be really aware because that just doesn't feel right, or you see the way people are reacting and you think, she's not behaving how you think she should	NP003 ...to style the question to the person that you're talking to. Like we change our mode of communication depending on who we're talking to.	NP004 Is it intuition?	IP005 I think it's the reception from the suspect a lot of the time as well... as soon as you go in, if they're hostile, very anti-police, you sort of have a feeling something's not right here		TP002 I suppose it would be managing your emotions, depending on what situation you're in. So perhaps if I went to an incident, it was quite traumatic, however, I would have to sort of manage my own emotions in order to assist the people who

react, maybe she's trying to hide something, she's not telling me the truth about what's going on. It's just a sense that you get, I think.					are sort of experiencing that or who are victims of that, and being able to act professionally, despite what I felt personally. So I suppose it's being cautious, or dealing with it, maybe
AP006 I've just thought, it's like almost like a spider-sense	NP003 Yes, because, well, it's a case of reading....not even necessarily realising you're doing it, you're picking up on that body language as well, or the, sorry, non-verbal communication as they call it these days but all those things are there and you read that some people are attuned to it other people aren't because they're more focused on what's been said to them.	IP007... on the face of it, it looks like what they tell you but there'll be little things that you'll think, that doesn't really sit right with what they've told me, or you can see people's expressions. I'm very visual so I watch people and I think a lot of the times people give away body language. So I think, okay, you've told me that but your body language is saying something else, so something else has happened	TP002 it's a physical thing, you know, physical feeling that you sort of get, where, like a fluttering, nervous feeling. Butterflies in your tummy...it's like a feeling in your stomach, you know, a gut feeling...		
	NP003...so if the person asking the question doesn't understand the questions then the person that you're talking to is not going to either and you're not going to be able to explain what you need and again a lot of	NP003 Yes, because, well, it's a case of reading....not even necessarily realising you're doing it, you're picking up on that body language as well, or the, sorry, non-verbal	TP003 Well I mean I would imagine that it would be the words of the victim really and how they come across and how their emotional views of the situation that they're in have an impact		

	<p>questions on the dash you can answer from your general conversation with people and I don't think it's right to just sit there and just plough through these questions and, I mean, it doesn't mean you have to read them verbatim, you know, to style [frame] the question to the person that you're talking to. Like we change our mode of communication depending on who we're talking to.</p>	<p>communication as they call it these days but all those things are there and you read that some people are attuned to it other people aren't because they're more focused on what's been said to them.</p>	<p>on the decisions that you make</p>		
		<p>TP002 cautiousness or suspicion</p>	<p>IP006 it's about having the ability to read people's inner thoughts and the way they're feeling without them speaking about it.</p>		

## Appendix 6 – Ethical Approval



10 October 2016

Dear Anne Eason

<b>Study Title:</b>	<b>The 'butterflies' effect! Emotional Intelligence, Domestic Violence and Police Decision-making</b>
<b>Ethics Committee reference:</b>	16/17:03

Thank you for submitting your documents for ethical review. The Ethics Committee was content to grant a favourable ethical opinion of the above research on the basis described in the application form, protocol and supporting documentation, revised in the light of any conditions set, subject to the general conditions set out in the attached document.

### **The Ethics Committee provides a favourable ethical opinion for - Part One Only**

There is no need to submit any further evidence to the Ethics Committee; the favourable opinion has been granted with the assumption of compliance

The favourable opinion of the EC does not grant permission or approval to undertake the research. Management permission or approval must be obtained from any host organisation, including University of Portsmouth, prior to the start of the study.



## Documents reviewed

The documents reviewed by The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Ethics Committee.

<i>Document</i>	<i>Version</i>	<i>Date</i>
Application Form	1	01/09/16
Interview schedule	1	01/09/16
Participant Information Sheet(s) (list if necessary)	1	01/09/16
Consent Form(s) (list if necessary)	1	01/09/16
Request for permission letter Northants police	1	01/09/16
Request for permission letter West Mercia Police	1	01/09/16
Draft email to participants for questionnaire	1	04/08/16
Email to police gatekeepers	1	01/09/16
Survey Instrument hyperlink	1	01/09/16
Evidence From External Organisation Showing Support	1	15/08/16

## Statement of compliance

The Committee is constituted in accordance with the Governance Arrangements set out by the University of Portsmouth

## After ethical review

### Reporting and other requirements

The enclosed document acts as a reminder that research should be conducted with integrity and gives detailed guidance on reporting requirements for studies with a favourable opinion, including:

- ☐ Notifying substantial amendments
  - Notification of serious breaches of the protocol

- Progress reports
- Notifying the end of the study

### Feedback

You are invited to give your view of the service that you have received from the Faculty Ethics Committee. If you wish to make your views known please contact the administrator [ethicsfhss@port.ac.uk](mailto:ethicsfhss@port.ac.uk)

<p><b>Please quote this number on all correspondence – 16/17:03</b></p>
---

Yours sincerely and wishing you every success in your research

Chair

Dr Jane Winstone

Email: [ethics-fhss@port.ac.uk](mailto:ethics-fhss@port.ac.uk)

Enclosures: *“After ethical review – guidance for researchers”*

Appendix 1

### **After ethical review – guidance for researchers**

This document sets out important guidance for researchers with a favourable opinion from a University of Portsmouth Ethics Committee. Please read the guidance carefully. A failure to

follow the guidance could lead to the committee reviewing and possibly revoking its opinion on the research.

It is assumed that the research will commence within 3 months of the date of the favourable ethical opinion or the start date stated in the application, whichever is the latest.

The research must not commence until the researcher has obtained any necessary management permissions or approvals – this is particularly pertinent in cases of research hosted by external organisations. The appropriate head of department should be aware of a member of staff's research plans.

If it is proposed to extend the duration of the study beyond that stated in the application, the Ethics Committee must be informed.

If the research extends beyond a year then an annual progress report must be submitted to the Ethics Committee.

When the study has been completed the Ethics Committee must be notified.

Any proposed substantial amendments must be submitted to the Ethics Committee for review. A substantial amendment is any amendment to the terms of the application for ethical review, or to the protocol or other supporting documentation approved by the Committee that is likely to affect to a significant degree:

- (a) the safety or physical or mental integrity of participants
- (b) the scientific value of the study
- (c) the conduct or management of the study

A substantial amendment should not be implemented until a favourable ethical opinion has been given by the Committee.

Researchers are reminded of the University's commitments as stated in the [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#):

- maintaining the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research

- ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards
- supporting a research environment that is underpinned by a culture of integrity and based on good governance, best practice and support for the development of researchers
- using transparent, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise
- working together to strengthen the integrity of research and to reviewing progress regularly and openly

In ensuring that it meets these commitments the University has adopted the [UKRIO Code of Practice for Research](#). Any breach of this code may be considered as misconduct and may be investigated following the University [Procedure for the Investigation of Allegations of Misconduct in Research](#).

Researchers are advised to use the [UKRIO checklist](#) as a simple guide to integrity.